

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES

DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)  
CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 371

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U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 C.F.R. § 1.5):

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED
PCT/AU98/00902	30 October 1998	31 October 1997

TITLE OF INVENTION: NOVEL GENE AND USES THEREFOR

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US: Paul Zev ZIMMET and Gregory COLLIER

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. § 371.
2. ☒ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. § 371.
3. ☒ This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. § 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. § 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
4. ☐ A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
5. ☒ A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(2))
  - a. ☐ is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
  - b. ☒ has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
  - c. ☐ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. ☒ A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(2)).
7. ☒ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(3))
  - a. ☐ are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
  - b. ☐ have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
  - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
  - d. ☒ have not been made and will not be made.
8. ☐ A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(3)).
9. ☒ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(4)).
10. ☐ A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(5)).

Items 11. to 16. below concern document(s) or information included:

11. ☐ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98.
12. ☒ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. ☐ A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.  
☐ A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
14. ☐ A substitute specification.
15. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
16. ☒ Other items or information: copy PCT Request; International Search Report; front page of WO 99/23217; return receipt postcard.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY "EXPRESS MAIL"

Express Mail Label No.: EJ004418543US

Date of Deposit: June 30, 1999

I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

*Blanche H. Cook*  
Blanche H. Cook

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- 17.
- ☒
- The following fees are submitted:

**BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 C.F.R. §§ 1.492(a)(1)-(5)):**

Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO..... \$840.00

International preliminary examination fee paid to  
(USPTO (37 C.F.R. § 1.482))..... \$670.00No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 C.F.R. § 1.482)  
but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 C.F.R. § 1.445(a)(2))..... \$760.00Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 C.F.R. § 1.482) nor  
international search fee (37 C.F.R. § 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO..... \$970.00International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 C.F.R. § 1.482)  
and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4)..... \$96.00CALCULATIONS PTO  
USE ONLY**ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =** \$970.00Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than ☐ 20 ☐ 30 months from  
the earliest claimed priority date (37 C.F.R. § 1.492(e)). \$

## CLAIMS

NUMBER FILED

NUMBER EXTRA

RATE

\$

Total claims

33 - 20 =

13

x \$18.00

\$234.00

Independent claims

5 - 3 =

2

x \$78.00

\$156.00

MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)

+ \$260.00

\$260.00

**TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =** \$1620.00Reduction by ½ for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity Statement must  
also be filed (Note 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.9, 1.27, 1.28) \$**SUBTOTAL =** \$1620.00

Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than

☐ 20 ☐ 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 C.F.R. § 1.492(f)).

+

\$

**TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =** \$1620.00Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 C.F.R. § 1.21(h)). The assignment must be  
accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 C.F.R. §§ 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property +

\$40.00

**TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =** \$1660.00Amount  
to be  
refunded: \$  
charged: \$

- a. ☒ A check in the amount of \$1,660.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.
- b. ☐ The Assistant Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952**.

**NOTE:** Where an appropriate time limit under 37 C.F.R. § 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 C.F.R. § 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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## A NOVEL GENE AND USES THEREFOR

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates generally to a nucleic acid molecule which encodes a protein associated with the modulation of obesity, diabetes and metabolic energy levels. More particularly, the present invention is directed to a nucleic acid molecule and a recombinant and purified naturally occurring protein encoded thereby and their use in therapeutic and diagnostic protocols for conditions such as obesity, diabetes and energy imbalance. The subject nucleic acid  
10 molecule and protein and their derivatives, homologues, analogues and mimetics are proposed as therapeutic and diagnostic agents for obesity, diabetes and energy imbalance.

Throughout this specification, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a  
15 stated element or integer or group of elements or integers but not the exclusion of any other element or integer or group of elements or integers.

Bibliographic details of the publications referred by author in this specification are collected at the end of the description. Sequence Identity Numbers (SEQ ID NOs.) for the nucleotide and  
20 amino acid sequences referred to in the specification are defined following the bibliography.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The increasing sophistication of recombinant DNA technology is greatly facilitating research and  
25 development in the medical, veterinary and allied human and animal health fields. This is particularly the case in the investigation of the genetic bases involved in the etiology of certain disease conditions. One particularly significant condition from the stand point of morbidity and mortality is obesity and its association with non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) and cardiovascular disease.

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Obesity is defined as a pathological excess of body fat and is the result of an imbalance between

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energy intake and energy expenditure for a sustained period of time. Obesity is the most common metabolic disease found in affluent societies. The prevalence of obesity in these nations is alarmingly high, ranging from 10% to upwards of 50% in some subpopulations (Bouchard, 1994). Of particular concern is the fact that the prevalence of obesity appears to be rising consistently in affluent societies and is now increasing rapidly in less prosperous nations as they become more affluent and/or adopt cultural practices from the more affluent countries (Zimmet, 1992).

In Australia, for example, studies using the definition of obesity of BMI>30 have found prevalence rates for obesity of 8.2-9.3% in men and 9.1-11.1% in women (Risk Factor Prevalence Study Management Committee, 1990; Waters and Bennett 1995). The prevalence rates for obesity are increasing in Australia, as they are in many affluent societies. Bennett and Magnus (1994) found that the mean weight of Australian females aged 20-69 increased by 3.1 kg (from 61.7 to 64.8 kg) from 1980 to 1989, while the corresponding increase in males was 1.8 kg (from 77.0 to 78.8 kg). No change in height was observed during this period. Accordingly, the crude prevalence rates of obesity increased from 8.0 to 13.2% in females and from 9.3 to 11.5% in males (Bennett and Magnus 1994). All of the above changes were statistically significant ( $p<0.05$ ).

The high and increasing prevalence of obesity has significant health implications. Obesity has been identified as a key risk indicator of preventable morbidity and mortality due to disease such as NIDDM and cardiovascular disease (National Health and Medical Research Council, 1996). The annual costs of obesity in Australia, for example, associated with these and other disease conditions have been conservatively estimated at AU\$810 million (National Health and Medical Research Council, 1996).

A genetic basis for the etiology of obesity is indicated *inter alia* from studies in twins, adoption studies and population-based analyses which suggest that genetic effects account for 25-80% of the variation in body weight in the general population (Bouchard 1994; Kopelman *et al*, 1994; Ravussin, 1995). It is considered that genes determine the possible range of body weight in an individual and then the environment influences the point within this range where the individual

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is located at any given time (Bouchard, 1994).

Obesity is a complex and heterogeneous disorder and of considerable relevance to society. However, despite numerous studies into genes thought to be involved in the pathogenesis of obesity, there have been surprisingly few significant findings in this area. In addition, genome-wide scans in various population groups have not produced definitive evidence of the chromosomal regions having a major effect on obesity.

The hypothalamus has long been recognised as a key brain area in the regulation of energy intake. Early studies led to the dual-centre hypothesis which proposed that two opposing centres in the hypothalamus were responsible for the initiation and termination of eating, the lateral hypothalamus (LHA; "hunger centre") and ventromedial hypothalamus (VMH; "satiety centre"; Stellar 1954). The dual-centre hypothesis has been repeatedly modified to accommodate the increasing information about the roles played by various other brain regions, neurotransmitter systems, and hormonal and neural signals originating in the gut on the regulation of food intake. In addition to the LHA and VMH, the paraventricular nucleus (PVN) is now considered to have an important integrative function in the control of energy intake.

A large number of neurotransmitters have been investigated as possible hypothalamic regulators of feeding behaviour including neuropeptide Y (NPY), glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1), melanin-concentrating hormone (MCH), serotonin, cholecystokinin and galanin. Some of these neurotransmitters stimulate food intake, some act in an anorexigenic manner and some have diverse effects on energy intake depending on the site of administration. For example, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) inhibits food intake when injected into the LHA, but stimulates eating when injected into the VMH or PVN (Leibowitz, 1985). Feeding behaviour is thought to be greatly influenced by the interaction of stimulatory and inhibitory signals in the hypothalamus.

In work leading up to the present invention, the inventors have made a significant break through in determining a genetic basis of obesity by identifying a genetic sequence differentially expressed in lean and obese animals. In accordance with the present invention, the inventors have isolated a novel gene which is proposed to be associated with energy balance and also in modulating

obesity and diabetes.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

- 5 One aspect of the present invention provides a nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence of nucleotides encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in larger amounts in hypothalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.
- 10 Another aspect of the present invention is directed to a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence, or a complementary form thereof, encoding an amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 or an amino acid sequence having at least 30% similarity to all or a part thereof or a mimetic or said amino acid sequence or a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing to said nucleic acid molecule under low stringency
- 15 conditions at 42°C and wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in a larger amount in hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

Yet another aspect of the present invention provides a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a protein or a

20 derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said nucleotide sequence is as substantially set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or a nucleotide sequence having at least about 30% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 and/or is capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C and wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in a larger amount in hyperthalamus tissue of

25 obese animals compared to lean animals.

Still yet another aspect of the present invention provides an isolated protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof which is produced in a larger amount in hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

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In yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an isolated protein or a

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derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said protein comprises an amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 or an amino acid sequence having at least 30% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 and wherein said protein is produced in a larger amount in hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals  
5 compared to lean animals.

A further aspect of the present invention is directed to an isolated protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said protein is encoded by a nucleotide sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or a nucleotide sequence  
10 having at least 60% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 and/or is capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C.

The protein of the present invention is referred to as "beacon" and the nucleotide sequence encoding beacon is referred to as the *beacon* gene.  
15

A further aspect of the present invention relates to a composition comprising beacon or its derivatives, homologues, analogues or mimetics or agonists or antagonists of beacon together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents.

20 Yet a further aspect of the present invention contemplates a method for treating a subject comprising administering to said subject a treatment effective amount of beacon or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof or a genetic sequence encoding same or an agonist or antagonist of beacon or *beacon* gene expression for a time and under conditions sufficient to effect treatment.

25

In accordance with this and other aspects of the present invention, treatments contemplated herein include but are not limited to obesity, anorexia, weight maintenance, energy imbalance and diabetes. Treatment may be by the administration of a pharmaceutical composition or genetic sequences *via* gene therapy. Treatment is contemplated for human subjects as well as animals  
30 such as animals important to livestock industry.

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Still yet another aspect of the present invention is directed to a diagnostic agent for use in monitoring or diagnosing conditions such as but not limited to obesity, anorexia, weight maintenance, energy imbalance and/or diabetes, said diagnostic agent selected from an antibody to beacon or its derivatives, homologues, analogues or mimetics and a genetic sequence useful  
5 in PCR, hybridization, RFLP amongst other techniques.

A summary of SEQ ID NOs used throughout the subject specification is provided in Table 1.

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TABLE 1

	SEQ ID NO.	DESCRIPTION
	1	Nucleotide sequence for <i>beacon</i>
5	2	Amino acid sequence for beacon
	3	Complementary sequence for SEQ ID NO:1
	4	Primer sequence
	5	Primer sequence
	6	Primer sequence
10	7	Primer sequence
	8	Primer sequence
	9	Primer sequence
	10-12	Primer and probe sequences used for <i>beacon</i> gene expression studies
	13	Nucleotide sequence for human <i>beacon</i>
15	14	Amino acid sequence for human beacon ("short" form of beacon)

A summary of the single and three letter abbreviations for amino acid residues used in the present specification is provided in Table 2.

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TABLE 2

5	Amino Acid	Three-letter Abbreviation	One-letter Symbol
	Alanine	Ala	A
	Arginine	Arg	R
	Asparagine	Asn	N
10	Aspartic acid	Asp	D
	Cysteine	Cys	C
	Glutamine	Gln	Q
	Glutamic acid	Glu	E
	Glycine	Gly	G
15	Histidine	His	H
	Isoleucine	Ile	I
	Leucine	Leu	L
	Lysine	Lys	K
	Methionine	Met	M
20	Phenylalanine	Phe	F
	Proline	Pro	P
	Serine	Ser	S
	Threonine	Thr	T
	Tryptophan	Trp	W
25	Tyrosine	Tyr	Y
	Valine	Val	V
	Any residue	Xaa	X

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**Figure 1A** is a representation showing the nucleotide sequence of both strands of a differentially expressed band in hypothalamus tissue of lean and obese *Psammomys obesus* corresponding to 5 *beacon*. The amino acids encoded by each codon are shown above in single letter code and the numbering refers to the amino acid position from the start codon.

**Figure 1B** is a representation of a nucleotide and corresponding amino acid sequence of human *beacon*. Human *beacon* is a "short" form of *Psammomys obesus beacon* except that amino acid 10 15 may be His or Arg. The corresponding codon may be CGC or CAC, respectively.

**Figure 2** is a representation showing (A). Amino acid alignments of beacon with putative human, mouse, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, *Fasciola hepatica*, rice and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* gene products. (B). Amino acid alignments of beacon with human ubiquitin and ubiquitin-like protein 15 8 from *Arabidopsis thaliana*. Identical amino acids are marked with a line and plus signs indicate deletions are indicated by forward slashes. A spliced leader sequence in the *F. hepatica* gene did not allow the aminoterminal amino acids to be compared.

**Figure 3** is a graphical representation showing correlations of hypothalamic beacon gene 20 expression with (A) body weight and (B) log plasma insulin concentrations in *Psammomys obesus*.

**Figure 4** is a graphical representation showing improved correlations of hypothalamic *beacon* gene expression with (A) body weight and (B) log plasma insulin concentrations in leptin-treated 25 *Psammomys obesus*.

**Figure 5** is a graphical representation showing correlations of beacon gene expression in adipose tissue with (A) body weight and (B) log plasma insulin, and in liver with (C) body weight and (D) log plasma insulin.

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**Figure 6** is a graphical representation showing effects of leptin treatment on hypothalamic

*beacon* gene expression in lean and obese *Psammomys obesus*.

**Figure 7** is a graphical representation showing effects of leptin treatment on adipose tissue *beacon* gene expression in lean and obese *Psammomys obesus*. (\*p=0.014 compared with lean control animals).

**Figure 8** is a graphical representation showing effects of nicotine treatment on (A) hypothalamic and (B) adipose tissue *beacon* gene expression in lean and obese *Psammomys obesus*.

**Figure 9** is a graphical representation of (A) food intake per day; (B) cumulative food intake; and (C) body weight change in *Psammomys obesus* over an 8 day period administered with *beacon* or saline.

**Figure 10** is a graphical representation showing food intake per day in (A) Group A *Psammomys obesus*; (B) Group B *Psammomys obesus* and (C) Group C *Psammomys obesus* administered with *beacon* or saline.

**Figure 11** is a graphical representation showing cumulative food intake over a 8 day period in (A) Group A *Psammomys obesus*; (B) Group B *Psammomys obesus*; and (C) Group C *Psammomys obesus* administered with *beacon* or saline.

**Figure 12** is a graphical representation showing *beacon* gene expression verses (A) body weight; and (B) percentage body fat in Group A *Psammomys obesus*.

**Figure 13** is a graphical representation showing *beacon* gene expression verses percentage body fat in (A) Group A *Psammomys obesus*; (B) Group B *Psammomys obesus*; and (C) Group C *Psammomys obesus*.

**Figure 14** is a graphical representation showing *beacon* gene expression in Group A, B and C *Psammomys obesus*.

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**Figure 15** is a graphical representation showing beacon gene expression verses log insulin in Group A, B and C *Psammomys obesus* animals.

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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is predicated in part on the identification of a novel gene associated *inter alia* with regulation of energy balance obesity and diabetes. The gene was identified following  
5 differential screening of hypothalamic mRNA between lean and obese animals.

Accordingly, one aspect of the present invention provides a nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence of nucleotide encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a protein or a derivative homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said nucleic acid molecule is  
10 expressed in a larger amount in hypothalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

The terms "lean" and "obese" are used in their most general sense but should be considered relative to the standard criteria for determining obesity. Generally, for human subjects the definition of obesity is BMI>30 (Risk Factor Prevalence 1990; Waters and Bennett, 1995).  
15

Conveniently, an animal model may be employed to study the effects of obese and lean animals. In particular, the present invention is exemplified using the *Psammomys obesus* (the Israeli sand rat) animal model of dietary-induced obesity and NIDDM. In its natural desert habitat, an active lifestyle and saltbush diet ensure that they remain lean and normoglycemic (Shafrir and Gutman,  
20 1993). However, in a laboratory setting on a diet of *ad libitum* chow (on which many other animal species remain healthy), a range of pathophysiological responses are seen (Barnett *et al*, 1994a, b; Barnett *et al*, 1995). By the age of 16 weeks, more than half of the animals become obese and approximately one third develop NIDDM. Only hyperphagic animals go on to develop hyperglycemia, highlighting the importance of excessive energy intake in the  
25 pathophysiology of obesity and NIDDM in *Psammomys obesus* (Collier *et al*, 1997a; Walder *et al*, 1997a). Other phenotypes found include hyperinsulinemia, dyslipidemia and impaired glucose tolerance (Collier *et al*, 1997a, b). *Psammomys obesus* exhibit a range of bodyweight and blood glucose and insulin levels which forms a continuous curve that closely resembles the patterns found in human populations, including the inverted U-shaped relationship between blood glucose  
30 and insulin levels known as "Starling's curve of the pancreas" (Barnett *et al*, 1994a; DeFronzo, 1988). It is the heterogeneity of the phenotypic response of *Psammomys obesus* which make it

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an ideal model to study the etiology and pathophysiology of obesity and NIDDM.

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is directed to a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence or a complementary form thereof encoding an amino acid  
5 sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 or an amino acid sequence having at least 60% similarity to all or a part thereof or is a mimetic thereof or a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing to said nucleic acid molecule under low stringency conditions at 42°C and wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in larger amounts in hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

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Another embodiment of the present invention provides a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said nucleotide sequence is as substantially set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or a nucleotide sequence having at  
15 least about 60% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 and/or is capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C and wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in a larger amount in hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

20 Reference herein to similarity is generally at a level of comparison of at least 15 consecutive or substantially consecutive nucleotides or at least 5 consecutive or substantially consecutive amino acid residues.

The term "similarity" as used herein includes exact identity between compared sequences at the  
25 nucleotide or amino acid level. Where there is non-identity at the nucleotide level, "similarity" includes differences between sequences which result in different amino acids that are nevertheless related to each other at the structural, functional, biochemical and/or conformational levels. Where there is non-identity at the amino acid level, "similarity" includes amino acids that are nevertheless related to each other at the structural, functional, biochemical and/or conformational  
30 levels. In a particularly preferred embodiment, nucleotide and sequence comparisons are made at the level of identity rather than similarity. Any number of programs are available to compare

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nucleotide and amino acid sequences. Preferred programs have regard to an appropriate alignment. One such program is Gap which considers all possible alignment and gap positions and creates an alignment with the largest number of matched bases and the fewest gaps. Gap uses the alignment method of Needleman and Wunsch (1970). Gap reads a scoring matrix that  
5 contains values for every possible GCG symbol match. GAP is available on ANGIS (Australian National Genomic Information Service) at website <http://mell1.angis.org.au..>

Reference herein to a low stringency at 42°C includes and encompasses from at least about 1% v/v to at least about 15% v/v formamide and from at least about 1M to at least about 2M salt for  
10 hybridisation, and at least about 1M to at least about 2M salt for washing conditions. Alternative stringency conditions may be applied where necessary, such as medium stringency, which includes and encompasses from at least about 16% v/v to at least about 30% v/v formamide and from at least about 0.5M to at least about 0.9M salt for hybridisation, and at least about 0.5M to at least about 0.9M salt for washing conditions, or high stringency, which includes and  
15 encompasses from at least about 31% v/v to at least about 50% v/v formamide and from at least about 0.01M to at least about 0.15M salt for hybridisation, and at least about 0.01M to at least about 0.15M salt for washing conditions.

The nucleotide sequence or amino acid sequence of the present invention may correspond to  
20 exactly the same sequence of the naturally occurring gene (or corresponding cDNA) or protein or may carry one or more nucleotide or amino acid substitutions, additions and/or deletions. The nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 corresponds to a new gene referred to herein as "*beacon*". The corresponding protein is "*beacon*". Reference herein to *beacon* includes, where appropriate, reference to the genomic gene or cDNA as well as any  
25 naturally occurring or induced derivatives. Apart from the substitutions, deletions and/or additions to the nucleotide sequence, the present invention further encompasses mutants, fragments, parts and portions of the nucleotide sequence corresponding to *beacon*. One useful form of a *beacon* encodes a "short" form of beacon. The short form of beacon corresponds to human beacon. The preferred short form of beacon is 33 amino acids in length. Such a short  
30 form can also be readily synthesised *in vitro*.



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A homologue is considered to be a *beacon* gene from another animal species. The *beacon* gene is exemplified herein from *Psammomys obesus* hypothalamus. The invention extends, however, to the homologous gene, as determined by nucleotide sequence and/or function, from humans, primates, livestock animals (eg. cows, sheep, pigs, horses, donkeys), laboratory test animals (eg. mice, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits), companion animals (eg. cats, dogs) and captured wild animals (eg. rodents, foxes, deer, kangaroos).

The nucleic acid of the present invention and in particular *beacon* and its derivatives and homologues may be in isolated or purified form and/or may be ligated to a vector such as an expression vector. Expression may be in a eukaryotic cell line (eg. mammalian, insect or yeast cells) or in microbial cells (eg. *E. coli*) or both.

The derivatives of the nucleic acid molecule of the present invention include oligonucleotides, PCR primers, antisense molecules, molecules suitable for use in co-suppression and fusion nucleic acid molecules. Ribozymes and DNA enzymes are also contemplated by the present invention directed to *beacon* or its mRNA. Derivatives and homologues of *beacon* are conveniently encompassed by those nucleotide sequences capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or 3 under low stringency conditions at 42°C.

Another aspect of the present invention provides an isolated protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof which is produced in larger amounts in hyperthalamus tissue in obese animals compared to lean animals.

In a more preferred aspect of the present invention, there is provided an isolated protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said protein comprises an amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 or an amino acid sequence having at least 60% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 and wherein said protein is produced in larger amounts by hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

A further aspect of the present invention is directed to an isolated protein or a derivative,

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homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said protein is encoded by a nucleotide sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or a nucleotide sequence having at least 60% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 and/or is capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C.

5

The protein of this aspect of the present invention is beacon. A truncated form of beacon is referred to as a "short form". The preferred short form is 33 amino acids in length.

Reference herein to beacon includes reference to isolated or purified naturally occurring beacon  
10 protein molecules as well as any derivatives, homologues, analogues and mimetics thereof. Derivatives includes parts, fragments and portions of beacon as well as single and multiple amino acid substitutions, deletions and/or additions to beacon. A derivative of beacon is conveniently encompassed by molecules encoded by a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C.

15

Other derivatives of beacon include chemical analogues. Analogues of beacon contemplated herein include, but are not limited to, modifications to side chains, incorporation of unnatural amino acids and/or their derivatives during peptide, polypeptide or protein synthesis and the use of crosslinkers and other methods which impose conformational constraints on the proteinaceous  
20 molecule or their analogues.

Examples of side chain modifications contemplated by the present invention include modifications of amino groups such as by reductive alkylation by reaction with an aldehyde followed by reduction with  $\text{NaBH}_4$ ; amidination with methylacetimidate; acylation with acetic  
25 anhydride; carbamoylation of amino groups with cyanate; trinitrobenzylation of amino groups with 2, 4, 6-trinitrobenzene sulphonic acid (TNBS); acylation of amino groups with succinic anhydride and tetrahydrophthalic anhydride; and pyridoxylation of lysine with pyridoxal-5-phosphate followed by reduction with  $\text{NaBH}_4$ .

30 The guanidine group of arginine residues may be modified by the formation of heterocyclic condensation products with reagents such as 2,3-butanedione, phenylglyoxal and glyoxal.

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The carboxyl group may be modified by carbodiimide activation *via* O-acylisourea formation followed by subsequent derivitisation, for example, to a corresponding amide.

5 Sulphydryl groups may be modified by methods such as carboxymethylation with iodoacetic acid or iodoacetamide; performic acid oxidation to cysteic acid; formation of a mixed disulphides with other thiol compounds; reaction with maleimide, maleic anhydride or other substituted maleimide; formation of mercurial derivatives using 4-chloromercuribenzoate, 4-chloromercuriphenylsulphonic acid, phenylmercury chloride, 2-chloromercuri-4-nitrophenol and other mercurials; carbamoylation with cyanate at alkaline pH.

10

Tryptophan residues may be modified by, for example, oxidation with N-bromosuccinimide or alkylation of the indole ring with 2-hydroxy-5-nitrobenzyl bromide or sulphenyl halides. Tyrosine residues on the other hand, may be altered by nitration with tetranitromethane to form a 3-nitrotyrosine derivative.

15

Modification of the imidazole ring of a histidine residue may be accomplished by alkylation with iodoacetic acid derivatives or N-carbethoxylation with diethylpyrocarbonate.

20 Examples of incorporating unnatural amino acids and derivatives during peptide synthesis include, but are not limited to, use of norleucine, 4-amino butyric acid, 4-amino-3-hydroxy-5-phenylpentanoic acid, 6-aminohexanoic acid, t-butylglycine, norvaline, phenylglycine, ornithine, sarcosine, 4-amino-3-hydroxy-6-methylheptanoic acid, 2-thienyl alanine and/or D-isomers of amino acids. A list of unnatural amino acid, contemplated herein is shown in Table 3.

25

TABLE 3

Non-conventional amino acid	Code	Non-conventional amino acid	Code
5 $\alpha$ -aminobutyric acid	Abu	L-N-methylalanine	Nmala
$\alpha$ -amino- $\alpha$ -methylbutyrate	Mgab	L-N-methylarginine	Nmarg
aminocyclopropane- carboxylate	Cpro	L-N-methylasparagine	Nmasn
10 aminoisobutyric acid	Aib	L-N-methylaspartic acid	Nmasp
aminonorbornyl- carboxylate	Norb	L-N-methylcysteine	Nmcys
cyclohexylalanine		L-N-methylglutamine	Nmgln
cyclopentylalanine	Cpen	L-N-methylglutamic acid	Nmglu
15 D-alanine	Dal	Chexa L-N-methylhistidine	Nmhis
D-arginine	Darg	L-N-methylisoleucine	Nmile
D-aspartic acid	Das	L-N-methylleucine	Nmleu
D-cysteine	Dcys	L-N-methyllysine	Nmlys
D-glutamine	Dgln	L-N-methylmethionine	Nmmt
20 D-glutamic acid	Dglu	L-N-methylnorleucine	Nmnle
D-histidine	Dhis	L-N-methylnorvaline	Nmnva
D-isoleucine	Dile	L-N-methylornithine	Nmorn
D-leucine	Dleu	L-N-methylphenylalanine	Nmphe
D-lysine	Dlys	L-N-methylproline	Nmpro
25 D-methionine	Dmet	L-N-methylserine	Nmser
D-ornithine	Dorn	L-N-methylthreonine	Nmthr
D-phenylalanine	Dphe	L-N-methyltryptophan	Nmtrp
D-proline	Dpro	L-N-methyltyrosine	Nmtyr
D-serine	Dser	L-N-methylvaline	Nmval
30 D-threonine	Dthr	L-N-methylethylglycine	Nmetg
D-tryptophan	Dtrp	L-N-methyl-t-butylglycine	Nmtbug
		L-norleucine	Nle
		L-norvaline	Nva

	D-tyrosine	Dtyr	$\alpha$ -methyl-aminoisobutyrate	Maib
	D-valine	Dval	$\alpha$ -methyl- $\gamma$ -aminobutyrate	Mgab
	D- $\alpha$ -methylalanine	Dmala	$\alpha$ -methylcyclohexylalanine	Mchexa
	D- $\alpha$ -methylarginine	Dmarg	$\alpha$ -methylcyclopentylalanine	Mcpen
5	D- $\alpha$ -methylasparagine	Dmasn	$\alpha$ -methyl- $\alpha$ -naphthylalanine	Manap
	D- $\alpha$ -methylaspartate	Dmasp	$\alpha$ -methylpenicillamine	Mpen
	D- $\alpha$ -methylcysteine	Dmcys	N-(4-aminobutyl)glycine	Nglu
	D- $\alpha$ -methylglutamine	Dmgln	N-(2-aminoethyl)glycine	Naeg
	D- $\alpha$ -methylhistidine	Dmhis	N-(3-aminopropyl)glycine	Norn
10	D- $\alpha$ -methylisoleucine	Dmile	N-amino- $\alpha$ -methylbutyrate	Nmaabu
	D- $\alpha$ -methylleucine	Dmleu	$\alpha$ -naphthylalanine	Anap
	D- $\alpha$ -methyllysine	Dmlys	N-benzylglycine	Nphe
	D- $\alpha$ -methylmethionine	Dmmet	N-(2-carbamylethyl)glycine	Ngln
	D- $\alpha$ -methylornithine	Dmorn	N-(carbamylmethyl)glycine	Nasn
15	D- $\alpha$ -methylphenylalanine	Dmphe	N-(2-carboxyethyl)glycine	Nglu
	D- $\alpha$ -methylproline	Dmpro	N-(carboxymethyl)glycine	Nasp
	D- $\alpha$ -methylserine	Dmser	N-cyclobutylglycine	Ncbut
	D- $\alpha$ -methylthreonine	Dmthr	N-cycloheptylglycine	Nchep
	D- $\alpha$ -methyltryptophan	Dmtrp	N-cyclohexylglycine	Nchex
20	D- $\alpha$ -methyltyrosine	Dmtty	N-cyclodecylglycine	Ncdec
	D- $\alpha$ -methylvaline	Dmval	N-cylcododecylglycine	Ncdod
	D-N-methylalanine	Dnmala	N-cyclooctylglycine	Ncoct
	D-N-methylarginine	Dnmarg	N-cyclopropylglycine	Ncpro
	D-N-methylasparagine	Dnmasn	N-cycloundecylglycine	Ncund
25	D-N-methylaspartate	Dnmasp	N-(2,2-diphenylethyl)glycine	Nbhm
	D-N-methylcysteine	Dnmcys	N-(3,3-diphenylpropyl)glycine	Nbhe
	D-N-methylglutamine	Dnmgln	N-(3-guanidinopropyl)glycine	Narg
	D-N-methylglutamate	Dnmglu	N-(1-hydroxyethyl)glycine	Nthr
	D-N-methylhistidine	Dnmhis	N-(hydroxyethyl)glycine	Nser
30	D-N-methylisoleucine	Dnmile	N-(imidazolylethyl)glycine	Nhis
	D-N-methylleucine	Dnmleu	N-(3-indolylethyl)glycine	Nhtrp

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L- $\alpha$ -methylvaline	Mval	L-N-methylhomophenylalanine	Nmhpe
N-(N-(2,2-diphenylethyl) carbamylmethyl)glycine	Nnbhm	N-(N-(3,3-diphenylpropyl) carbamylmethyl)glycine	Nnbhe
1-carboxy-1-(2,2-diphenyl- 5 ethylamino)cyclopropane	Nmbc		

Crosslinkers can be used, for example, to stabilise 3D conformations, using homo-bifunctional crosslinkers such as the bifunctional imido esters having (CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>n</sub> spacer groups with n=1 to  
 10 n=6, glutaraldehyde, N-hydroxysuccinimide esters and hetero-bifunctional reagents which usually contain an amino-reactive moiety such as N-hydroxysuccinimide and another group specific-reactive moiety such as maleimido or dithio moiety (SH) or carbodiimide (COOH). In addition, peptides can be conformationally constrained by, for example, incorporation of C $_{\alpha}$  and N $_{\alpha}$ -methylamino acids, introduction of double bonds between C $_{\alpha}$  and C $_{\beta}$  atoms of amino  
 15 acids and the formation of cyclic peptides or analogues by introducing covalent bonds such as forming an amide bond between the N and C termini, between two side chains or between a side chain and the N or C terminus.

All such modifications may also be useful in stabilizing the beacon molecule for use in *in vivo*  
 20 administration protocols or for diagnostic purposes.

The identification of beacon permits the generation of a range of therapeutic molecules capable of modulating expression of beacon or modulating the activity of beacon. Modulators contemplated by the present invention includes agonists and antagonists of beacon expression.  
 25 Antagonists of beacon expression include antisense molecules, ribozymes and co-suppression molecules. Agonists include molecules which increase promoter activity or which interfere with negative regulatory mechanisms. Antagonists of beacon include antibodies and inhibitor peptide fragments. All such molecules may first need to be modified to enable such molecules to penetrate cell membranes. Alternatively, viral agents may be employed to introduce genetic  
 30 elements to modulate expression of *beacon*. In so far as beacon acts in association with other genes such as the *ob* gene which encodes leptin, the therapeutic molecules may target both the

*beacon* and *ob* genes or their translation products.

The present invention contemplates, therefore, a method for modulating expression of *beacon* in a mammal, said method comprising contacting the *beacon* gene with an effective amount of  
5 a modulator of *beacon* expression for a time and under conditions sufficient to up-regulate or down-regulate or otherwise modulate expression of *beacon*. For example, a nucleic acid molecule encoding *beacon* or a derivative or homologue thereof may be introduced into a cell to enhance the ability of that cell to produce beacon, conversely, *beacon* antisense sequences such as oligonucleotides may be introduced to decrease the availability of beacon molecules.

10

Another aspect of the present invention contemplates a method of modulating activity of beacon in a mammal, said method comprising administering to said mammal a modulating effective amount of a molecule for a time and under conditions sufficient to increase or decrease beacon activity. The molecule may be a proteinaceous molecule or a chemical entity and may also be  
15 a derivative of beacon or its ligand.

Modulating levels of *beacon* expression is important in the treatment of a range of conditions such as obesity, anorexia, energy imbalance, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, dyslipidemia, hypertension and insulin resistance. It may also be useful in the agricultural industry to assist  
20 in the generation of leaner animals, or where required, more obese animals. Accordingly, the mammal contemplated by the present invention includes but is not limited to humans, primates, livestock animals (eg. pigs, sheep, cows, horses, donkeys), laboratory test animals (eg. mice, rats, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits), companion animals (eg. dogs, cats) and captured wild animals (eg. foxes, kangaroos, deer). A particularly preferred host is a human, primate or  
25 livestock animal.

Accordingly, the present invention contemplates in one embodiment a composition comprising a modulator of *beacon* expression or beacon activity and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents. In another embodiment, the composition comprises beacon  
30 or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents. The compositions may also comprise leptin or modulations



of leptin activity or *ob* expression.

For brevity, all such components of such a composition are referred to as "active components".

- 5 The compositions of active components in a form suitable for injectable use include sterile aqueous solutions (where water soluble) and sterile powders for the extemporaneous preparation of sterile injectable solutions. In all cases, the form must be sterile and must be fluid to the extent that easy syringability exists. It must be stable under the conditions of manufacture and storage and must be preserved against the contaminating action of
- 10 microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi.

The carrier can be a solvent or other medium containing, for example, water, ethanol, polyol (for example, glycerol, propylene glycol and liquid polyethylene glycol, and the like), suitable mixtures thereof, and vegetable oils.

- 15 The preventions of the action of microorganisms can be brought about by various antibacterial and antifungal agents, for example, parabens, chlorobutanol, phenol, sorbic acid, thimerosal and the like. In many cases, it will be preferable to include isotonic agents, for example, sugars or sodium chloride. Prolonged absorption of the injectable compositions can be brought about
- 20 by the use in the compositions of agents delaying absorption, for example, aluminum monostearate and gelatin.

- Sterile injectable solutions are prepared by incorporating the active components in the required amount in the appropriate solvent with optionally other ingredients, as required, followed by
- 25 sterilization by, for example, filter sterilization, irradiation or other convenient means. In the case of sterile powders for the preparation of sterile injectable solutions, the preferred methods of preparation are vacuum drying and the freeze-drying technique which yield a powder of the active ingredient plus any additional desired ingredient from previously sterile-filtered solution thereof.

30

When *beacon* and beacon including beacon itself are suitably protected they may be orally "

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administered, for example, with an inert diluent or with an assimilable edible carrier, or it may be enclosed in hard or soft shell gelatin capsule, or it may be compressed into tablets, or it may be incorporated directly with the food of the diet. For oral therapeutic administration, the active compound may be incorporated with excipients and used in the form of ingestible tablets, 5 buccal tablets, troches, capsules, elixirs, suspensions, syrups, wafers, and the like. Such compositions and preparations should contain at least 1% by weight of active compound. The percentage of the compositions and preparations may, of course, be varied and may conveniently be between about 5 to about 80% of the weight of the unit. The amount of active compound in such therapeutically useful compositions is such that a suitable dosage will be 10 obtained. Preferred compositions or preparations according to the present invention are prepared so that an oral dosage unit form contains between about 0.1  $\mu$ g and 2000 mg of active compound.

The tablets, troches, pills, capsules and the like may also contain the following: A binder such 15 as gum tragacanth, acacia, corn starch or gelatin; excipients such as dicalcium phosphate; a disintegrating agent such as corn starch, potato starch, alginic acid and the like; a lubricant such as magnesium stearate; and a sweetening agent such a sucrose, lactose or saccharin may be added or a flavouring agent such as peppermint, oil of wintergreen, or cherry flavouring. When the dosage unit form is a capsule, it may contain, in addition to materials of the above 20 type, a liquid carrier. Various other materials may be present as coatings or to otherwise modify the physical form of the dosage unit. For instance, tablets, pills, or capsules may be coated with shellac, sugar or both. A syrup or elixir may contain the active compound, sucrose as a sweetening agent, methyl and propylparabens as preservatives, a dye and flavouring such as cherry or orange flavour. Of course, any material used in preparing any dosage unit form 25 should be pharmaceutically pure and substantially non-toxic in the amounts employed. In addition, the active compound may be incorporated into sustained-release preparations and formulations.

Pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents include any and all solvents, dispersion 30 media, coatings, antibacterial and antifungal agents, isotonic and absorption delaying agents and the like. The use of such media and agents for pharmaceutical active substances is well known

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in the art. Except insofar as any conventional media or agent is incompatible with the active ingredient, use thereof in the therapeutic compositions is contemplated. Supplementary active ingredients can also be incorporated into the compositions.

- 5 It is especially advantageous to formulate parenteral compositions in dosage unit form for ease of administration and uniformity of dosage. Dosage unit form as used herein refers to physically discrete units suited as unitary dosages for the mammalian subjects to be treated; each unit containing a predetermined quantity of active material calculated to produce the desired therapeutic effect in association with the required pharmaceutical carrier. The
- 10 specification for the novel dosage unit forms of the invention are dictated by and directly dependent on (a) the unique characteristics of the active material and the particular therapeutic effect to be achieved, and (b) the limitations inherent in the art of compounding such an active material for the treatment of disease in living subjects having a diseased condition in which bodily health is impaired as herein disclosed in detail.

15

The principal active component may be compounded for convenient and effective administration in sufficient amounts with a suitable pharmaceutically acceptable carrier in dosage unit form. A unit dosage form can, for example, contain the principal active component in amounts ranging from 0.5  $\mu$ g to about 2000 mg. Expressed in proportions, the active

20 compound is generally present in from about 0.5  $\mu$ g to about 2000 mg/ml of carrier. In the case of compositions containing supplementary active ingredients, the dosages are determined by reference to the usual dose and manner of administration of the said ingredients.

In general terms, effective amounts of beacon will range from 0.01 ng/kg/body weight to above

25 10,000 mg/kg/body weight. Alternative amounts range from 0.1 ng/kg/body weight is above 1000 mg/kg/body weight. Beacon may be administered per minute, hour, day, week, month or year depending on the condition being treated. The route of administration may vary and includes intravenous, intraperitoneal, sub-cutaneous, intramuscular, intranasal, *via* suppository, *via* infusion, *via* drip, orally or *via* other convenient means.

30

The pharmaceutical composition may also comprise genetic molecules such as a vector capable

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of transfecting target cells where the vector carries a nucleic acid molecule capable of modulating *beacon* expression or beacon activity. The vector may, for example, be a viral vector.

- 5 Still another aspect of the present invention is directed to antibodies to beacon and its derivatives and homologues. Such antibodies may be monoclonal or polyclonal and may be selected from naturally occurring antibodies to beacon or may be specifically raised to beacon or derivatives or homologues thereof. In the case of the latter, beacon or its derivatives or homologues may first need to be associated with a carrier molecule. The antibodies and/or
- 10 recombinant beacon or its derivatives of the present invention are particularly useful as therapeutic or diagnostic agents.

For example, beacon and its derivatives can be used to screen for naturally occurring antibodies to beacon which may occur in certain autoimmune diseases or where cell death is occurring.

- 15 These may occur, for example in some autoimmune diseases. Alternatively, specific antibodies can be used to screen for beacon. Techniques for such assays are well known in the art and include, for example, sandwich assays and ELISA.

- Antibodies to beacon of the present invention may be monoclonal or polyclonal and may be
- 20 selected from naturally occurring antibodies to the beacon or may be specifically raised to the beacon or its derivatives. In the case of the latter, the beacon protein may need first to be associated with a carrier molecule. Alternatively, fragments of antibodies may be used such as Fab fragments. Furthermore, the present invention extends to recombinant and synthetic antibodies and to antibody hybrids. A "synthetic antibody" is considered herein to include
- 25 fragments and hybrids of antibodies. The antibodies of this aspect of the present invention are particularly useful for immunotherapy and may also be used as a diagnostic tool or as a means for purifying beacon.

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For example, specific antibodies can be used to screen for beacon proteins. The latter would be important, for example, as a means for screening for levels of beacon in a cell extract or other biological fluid or purifying beacon made by recombinant means from culture supernatant fluid. Techniques for the assays contemplated herein are known in the art and include, for  
5 example, sandwich assays and ELISA.

It is within the scope of this invention to include any second antibodies (monoclonal, polyclonal or fragments of antibodies) directed to the first mentioned antibodies discussed above. Both the first and second antibodies may be used in detection assays or a first antibody may be used  
10 with a commercially available anti-immunoglobulin antibody. An antibody as contemplated herein includes any antibody specific to any region of beacon.

Both polyclonal and monoclonal antibodies are obtainable by immunization with the enzyme or protein and either type is utilizable for immunoassays. The methods of obtaining both types  
15 of sera are well known in the art. Polyclonal sera are less preferred but are relatively easily prepared by injection of a suitable laboratory animal with an effective amount of beacon, or antigenic parts thereof, collecting serum from the animal, and isolating specific sera by any of the known immunoadsorbent techniques. Although antibodies produced by this method are utilizable in virtually any type of immunoassay, they are generally less favoured because of the  
20 potential heterogeneity of the product.

The use of monoclonal antibodies in an immunoassay is particularly preferred because of the ability to produce them in large quantities and the homogeneity of the product. The preparation of hybridoma cell lines for monoclonal antibody production derived by fusing an immortal cell  
25 line and lymphocytes sensitized against the immunogenic preparation can be done by techniques which are well known to those who are skilled in the art. (See, for example Douillard and Hoffman, Basic Facts about Hybridomas, in *Compendium of Immunology* Vol II, ed. by Schwartz, 1981; Kohler and Milstein, *Nature* 256: 495-499, 1975; *European Journal of Immunology* 6: 511-519, 1976).

30

Another aspect of the present invention contemplates a method for detecting beacon or a

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derivative or homologue thereof in a biological sample from a subject said method comprising contacting said biological sample with an antibody specific for beacon or its antigenic derivatives or homologues for a time and under conditions sufficient for a complex to form, and then detecting said complex.

5

The presence of the complex is indicative of the presence of beacon. This assay may be quantitated or semi-quantitated to determine a propensity to develop obesity or other conditions or to monitor a therapeutic regimen.

- 10 The presence of beacon may be accomplished in a number of ways such as by Western blotting and ELISA procedures. A wide range of immunoassay techniques are available as can be seen by reference to US Patent Nos. 4,016,043, 4, 424,279 and 4,018,653. These, of course, includes both single-site and two-site or "sandwich" assays of the non-competitive types, as well as in the traditional competitive binding assays. These assays also include direct binding of a  
15 labelled antibody to a target.

Sandwich assays are among the most useful and commonly used assays. A number of variations of the sandwich assay technique exist, and all are intended to be encompassed by the present invention. Briefly, in a typical forward assay, an unlabelled antibody is immobilized on a solid  
20 substrate and the sample to be tested brought into contact with the bound molecule. After a suitable period of incubation, for a period of time sufficient to allow formation of an antibody-beacon complex, a second antibody specific to the beacon, labelled with a reporter molecule capable of producing a detectable signal, is then added and incubated, allowing time sufficient for the formation of another complex of antibody-beacon-labelled antibody. Any  
25 unreacted material is washed away, and the presence of the beacon is determined by observation of a signal produced by the reporter molecule. The results may either be qualitative, by simple observation of the visible signal, or may be quantitated by comparing with a control sample containing known amounts of hapten. Variations on the forward assay include a simultaneous assay, in which both sample and labelled antibody are added simultaneously to the bound  
30 antibody. These techniques are well known to those skilled in the art, including any minor variations as will be readily apparent. In accordance with the present invention the sample is

one which might contain beacon including cell extract, tissue biopsy or possibly serum, saliva, mucosal secretions, lymph, tissue fluid and respiratory fluid. The sample is, therefore, generally a biological sample comprising biological fluid but also extends to fermentation fluid and supernatant fluid such as from a cell culture.

5

The solid surface is typically glass or a polymer, the most commonly used polymers being cellulose, polyacrylamide, nylon, polystyrene, polyvinyl chloride or polypropylene. The solid supports may be in the form of tubes, beads, discs of microplates, or any other surface suitable for conducting an immunoassay. The binding processes are well-known in the art and generally consist of cross-linking covalently binding or physically adsorbing, the polymer-antibody complex is washed in preparation for the test sample. An aliquot of the sample to be tested is then added to the solid phase complex and incubated for a period of time sufficient (e.g. 2-40 minutes or overnight if more convenient) and under suitable conditions (e.g. from room temperature to about 37°C) to allow binding of any subunit present in the antibody. Following the incubation period, the antibody subunit solid phase is washed and dried and incubated with a second antibody specific for a portion of beacon. The second antibody is linked to a reporter molecule which is used to indicate the binding of the second antibody to beacon.

An alternative method involves immobilizing the target molecules in the biological sample and then exposing the immobilized target to specific antibody which may or may not be labelled with a reporter molecule. Depending on the amount of target and the strength of the reporter molecule signal, a bound target may be detectable by direct labelling with the antibody. Alternatively, a second labelled antibody, specific to the first antibody is exposed to the target-first antibody complex to form a target-first antibody-second antibody tertiary complex. The complex is detected by the signal emitted by the reporter molecule.

By "reporter molecule" as used in the present specification, is meant a molecule which, by its chemical nature, provides an analytically identifiable signal which allows the detection of antigen-bound antibody. Detection may be either qualitative or quantitative. The most commonly used reporter molecules in this type of assay are either enzymes, fluorophores or radionuclide containing molecules (i.e. radioisotopes) and chemiluminescent molecules.

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In the case of an enzyme immunoassay, an enzyme is conjugated to the second antibody, generally by means of glutaraldehyde or periodate. As will be readily recognized, however, a wide variety of different conjugation techniques exist, which are readily available to the skilled artisan. Commonly used enzymes include horseradish peroxidase, glucose oxidase, beta-galactosidase and alkaline phosphatase, amongst others. The substrates to be used with the specific enzymes are generally chosen for the production, upon hydrolysis by the corresponding enzyme, of a detectable colour change. Examples of suitable enzymes include alkaline phosphatase and peroxidase. It is also possible to employ fluorogenic substrates, which yield a fluorescent product rather than the chromogenic substrates noted above. In all cases, the enzyme-labelled antibody is added to the first antibody hapten complex, allowed to bind, and then the excess reagent is washed away. A solution containing the appropriate substrate is then added to the complex of antibody-antigen-antibody. The substrate will react with the enzyme linked to the second antibody, giving a qualitative visual signal, which may be further quantitated, usually spectrophotometrically, to give an indication of the amount of hapten which was present in the sample. A "reporter molecule" also extends to use of cell agglutination or inhibition of agglutination such as red blood cells on latex beads, and the like.

Alternately, fluorescent compounds, such as fluorecein and rhodamine, may be chemically coupled to antibodies without altering their binding capacity. When activated by illumination with light of a particular wavelength, the fluorochrome-labelled antibody adsorbs the light energy, inducing a state to excitability in the molecule, followed by emission of the light at a characteristic color visually detectable with a light microscope. As in the EIA, the fluorescent labelled antibody is allowed to bind to the first antibody-hapten complex. After washing off the unbound reagent, the remaining tertiary complex is then exposed to the light of the appropriate wavelength the fluorescence observed indicates the presence of the hapten of interest. Immunofluorescence and EIA techniques are both very well established in the art and are particularly preferred for the present method. However, other reporter molecules, such as radioisotope, chemiluminescent or bioluminescent molecules, may also be employed.

The present invention also contemplates genetic assays such as involving PCR analysis to detect *beacon* or its derivatives.



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The assays of the present invention may also extend to measuring *beacon* or beacon in association with *ob* or leptin.

The present invention is further described by reference to the following non-limiting Examples.

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## EXAMPLE 1

### Animals

A *Psammomys obesus* colony is maintained at Deakin University, with the breeding pairs fed  
5 *ad libitum* a diet of lucerne and chow. Experimental animals were weaned at four weeks of age  
and given a diet of standard laboratory chow from which 12% of energy was derived from fat,  
63% from carbohydrate and 25% from protein (Barastoc, Pakenham, Australia). Animals were  
housed individually in a temperature controlled room ( $22 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ ) with a 12-12-hour light-dark  
cycle. The animals used in the study were aged 16-20 weeks during the pretreatment period.  
10 A total of 30 *Psammomys obesus* were investigated in this study, of which 10 were treated with  
leptin as described below and 20 were used as controls (treated with saline only).

## EXAMPLE 2

### Leptin Treatment

15 A group of lean and obese *Psammomys obesus* were followed for a 7-day period with free  
access to food and water to establish baseline data for food intake (measured by the rate of  
disappearance), body weight, blood glucose and plasma insulin concentrations. After the  
baseline period, the animals were given intraperitoneal injections three times per day (at 0800,  
20 1600 and 2400) of 15 mg leptin per kg body weight, or equivalent volume of saline for control  
animals, for a total of 7 days. This dosage of leptin resulted in a total of 45 mg/kg/day. Body  
weight and food intake were measured daily throughout the study. In addition, blood was  
collected from the animals on days 2, 4 and 7 at midday (the midpoint between the morning and  
afternoon injections) for biochemical analyses. The results clearly demonstrated that leptin was  
25 effective in reducing body weight and food intake in the lean animals, however, the obese  
animal remained leptin resistant and demonstrated no differences in food intake or body weight  
(Walder et al 1997b).

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**EXAMPLE 3****Nicotine treatment**

As described above for the leptin treatment, animals were followed for a 1 week run in period  
5 before being allocated to either infusion with 12mg/day nicotine or vehicle control infusion for  
7 days. All infusions were *via* mini-osmotic pumps implanted subcutaneously (Alza, California,  
USA). Nicotine treatment resulted in a significant reduction in food intake and body weight,  
this effect was more pronounced than the effect of leptin described above and occurred in both  
lean and obese animals.

10

At the completion of either study the animals were killed by anaesthetic overdose (120 mg/kg  
pentobarbitone) and selected fat depots (interscapular, perirenal, epididymal, mesenteric and  
intramuscular) were removed and weighed to allow an estimate of body fat content. The  
weights of the various fat depots were combined and divided by total body mass to provide this  
15 estimate.

All of the experiments described above were carried out following the Australian NHMRC  
principles of laboratory animal care and approved by the Deakin University Animal Ethics  
Committee, Deakin University, Geelong.

20

**EXAMPLE 4****Analytical methods**

Whole blood glucose was measured using an enzymatic glucose analyser (Model 27, Yellow  
25 Springs Instruments, Ohio). Plasma insulin concentrations were determined using a double  
antibody solid phase radioimmunoassay (Phadeseph, Kabi Pharmacia Diagnostics, Sweden).

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**EXAMPLE 5****Differential display polymerase chain reaction (ddPCR)**

mRNA was extracted from the hypothalamus using a Dynabeads mRNA DIRECT kit (Dynal, Oslo, Norway). The mRNA was reverse transcribed to form cDNA using the oligo-dT primer attached to the beads and AMV reverse transcriptase (Promega, Madison, WI). The ddPCR procedure developed by Liang and Pardee (1992) was modified such that second strand cDNA was produced using arbitrary 13mers and then used for the PCR reaction with the same arbitrary primer and three one-base-anchored oligo-dT primers. All primers were obtained from GenHunter Corporation (Nashville, Tennessee). The sequence of the primers that gave the beacon gene PCR product were 5'-AAGCTTTTTTTTTTTTG-3' [SEQ ID NO:4] (G-anchored primer) and 5'-AAGCTTCGGGTAA-3' [SEQ ID NO:5] (arbitrary primer 11). The 20 µl second strand cDNA synthesis reaction contained 200 nM arbitrary primer, 12.5 µM dNTPs, 100 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.4), 50 mM KCl, 1.5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.001% gelatin and 1 unit Taq DNA polymerase (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany). Denaturation was performed at 94°C for one minute, annealing at 40°C for 2 minutes and elongation at 72°C for 5 minutes. The reactions were then placed at 94°C for 2 minutes to separate the 2 strands of cDNA and the second strand removed after drawing the first strand attached to magnetic beads to the side of the tube with the use of a magnet. PCR was performed using 2 µl second strand cDNA, 200 nM of each primer, 2 µM dNTPs, 0.2 µl α-[<sup>33</sup>P]dATP (2,000 Ci/mmol), 100 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.4), 50 mM KCl, 1.5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.001% w/v gelatin and 1 unit Taq DNA polymerase (Qiagen) in a 20 µl reaction. Amplification was carried out in a Perkin Elmer 9700 DNA thermal cycler for 40 cycles of denaturation at 94°C for 30 seconds, annealing at 40°C for 2 minutes and extension at 72°C for one minute, with a final extension at 72°C for 5 minutes. The PCR products were separated on a 4.5% w/v polyacrylamide gel, and differentially expressed PCR fragments were visualized by exposing the dried gel to x-ray film.

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**EXAMPLE 6****Band recovery, cloning and sequencing**

Candidate bands were excised from the gel and reamplified by PCR using the appropriate  
 5 primer combination under the PCR conditions stated above except that the dNTP condition was  
 20 µM and no radioisotope was included. The putative differentially expressed cDNA  
 fragments were cloned using the pCR-TRAP cloning system (GenHunter Corporation).  
 Sequencing reactions were carried out using ABI PRISM dye terminator cycle sequencing  
 10 ready reaction kits and analysed on an ABI 373A DNA sequencer. Gene database searches  
 were performed at the National Centre for Biotechnology Information using the BLAST  
 network service.

**EXAMPLE 7****Quantitation of gene expression**

15 Animals were killed by lethal overdose of pentobarbitone (120 mg/kg) and the following tissues  
 were removed: liver, spleen, kidney, heart, skeletal muscle (gastrocnemius), and adipose tissue  
 from the suprascapular, perirenal, intramuscular and mesenteric fat depots. RNA was extracted  
 from tissues using RNEasy kits (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany). RNA was quantitated by  
 20 spectrophotometry at 260 nm, and 1 µg of RNA was then reverse transcribed at 42°C for 1 h  
 with 10U of AMV Reverse Transcriptase (Boehringer Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany)  
 according to the manufacturer's instructions. Oligonucleotide primers for the beacon gene PCR  
 were chosen from the sequence previously determined. Primers were also selected for the beta-  
 actin gene by comparing mRNA sequences from various mammals to identify highly conserved  
 25 regions. The primer sequences used were:

beta-actin -	forward 5'- agtccgcggttaagtgaaca -3' [SEQ ID NO:6]
	reverse 5'- ctccaggttcacccatcgt -3' [SEQ ID NO:7]
<i>beacon</i> -	forward 5'-ggctacagcttcaccaccac-3' [SEQ ID NO:8]
	reverse 5'-gcttgctgatccacatctgc-3' [SEQ ID NO:9]

30

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PCR was performed by adding 100 ng of cDNA to a reaction mix containing 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.3 at 20°C), 1.5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 50 mM KCl, 200 µM each dNTP, 100 pmol each primer and 1.25 U Taq DNA Polymerase (Qiagen). Standard PCR consisted of 30 cycles of 94°C for 0.5 min (denaturation), 58°C (beta-actin) or 53°C (*beacon*) for 0.5 min (annealing) and 72°C for 1 min (extension), with a final extension step of 72°C for 5 min. 10 µl of each PCR product was fractionated by agarose gel electrophoresis in a 2% w/v gel containing 0.5 µg/ml ethidium bromide at 6 V/cm for 90 min and photographed under ultraviolet transillumination at 302 nm. For quantitation of beacon gene expression, the linear phases of both of the above PCR's were determined empirically as 20 cycles for beta-actin and 24 cycles for *beacon*. PCR's and electrophoresis were conducted as above (for the appropriate number of cycles) and gene expression quantitated by computerised densitometry (Eagle Eye II System, Stratagene, USA). *beacon* gene expression was determined as the ratio of densities of *beacon* to beta-actin PCR products from the same tissues.

## EXAMPLE 8

### Statistical analysis

All experimental data are expressed as means  $\pm$  s.e.m. A one-way analysis of variance in combination with a Tukey's multiple comparison test was used to compare means between and within groups, and a two-sample unpaired t-test was used where appropriate. In all instances probability values of  $<0.05$  were considered significant.

## EXAMPLE 9

### Identification of a body weight-related gene by ddPCR

To identify novel genes that are associated with regulation of energy balance, we compared the hypothalamic mRNA profile of lean and obese *Psammomys obesus*. One cDNA fragment amplified with the G-anchored primer and arbitrary primer 11 was found to be expressed in larger amounts in the obese animals. The cDNA band of approximately 400 base pairs was excised from the gel, reamplified and cloned.

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**EXAMPLE 10****Nucleotide sequence**

Both strands of the differentially expressed band from the obese animals were sequenced. The sequences were identical and are shown in Figure 1A the coding sequence is SEQ ID NO:1 and the complementary sequence is SEQ ID NO:3. The corresponding amino acid sequence is SEQ ID NO:2. This sequence was compared against nucleotide sequence databases and the six-frame conceptual translation products against protein sequence databases. Strong homology was found with genes from humans, mice, *Caenorhabditis elegans*, *Fasciola hepatica*, rice and *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and weaker homology with ubiquitin and ubiquitin-like proteins. The genes in other species were not named, the inventors called the gene *beacon*. The translation product of the *C. elegans* gene denoted as 'weak similarity to Arabidopsis thaliana ubiquitin-like protein 8' was 81% homologous with beacon and enabled the open reading frame of beacon to be determined. Beacon was found to be 73 amino acids long, the same length as the *C.elegans* gene. Both the start and stop codons were identified within the ddPCR fragment, eliminating the need to probe a cDNA library to determine the full sequence. The full amino acid sequence of beacon is shown in Figure 1 and the amino acid alignments with gene products in humans, mice, *C. elegans*, *F. hepatica*, rice and *S. cerevisiae*, and also human ubiquitin and ubiquitin-like protein 8 from *Arabidopsis thaliana* are shown in Figures 2A and B.

20

The nucleotide sequence and corresponding amino acid sequence for human *beacon* shown in Figure 1B and corresponds to SEQ ID NO:13 and 14, respectively. The human *beacon* sequence substantially corresponds to a short form of the *Psammomys obesus* with the exception that amino acid 15 may be His or Arg and the corresponding codon is CAC or CGC, respectively. In Figure 1B this codon is represented as "CNC" wherein N is preferably A or G.

25

**EXAMPLE 11****Analysis of protein**

Analysis of the putative protein sequence using ProtParam tool indicated that beacon has a molecular weight of 8503.9 and is a stable protein with an estimated half-life of 30 hours. The

30

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protein does not have an aminoterminal signal sequence often found in proteins destined for export from the cell or for a membrane location. No nuclear targeting signal was found suggesting that beacon is not found in the nucleus. Transmembrane segments were also not found, but beacon may be a peripheral membrane protein, binding to the surface of integral membrane proteins. Beacon appears to have an intramitochondrial signal and may be located within the mitochondrial intermembrane space or the mitochondrial matrix space. Many proteins localized at the mitochondrial inner membrane are likely to be peripheral membrane proteins which exist as members of large membrane complexes. A short form of beacon (33 amino acids) is used in some of the studies. Preliminary human sequence data for *beacon* indicate that in humans, a premature stop codon results in the 33 amino acid short form. The short form comprises the first 33 amino acids of the amino acid sequence given in Figure 1B and 2A for human beacon. Amino acid 15 of human beacon may be His or Arg. The short form is also easier to synthesize chemically.

15

**EXAMPLE 12****PCR of the *beacon* gene**

PCR primers were designed from the nucleotide sequence of beacon to yield a PCR product of 169 bp. These primers successfully yielded the correct size PCR product with *Psammomys obesus* hypothalamic cDNA. PCR of *Psammomys obesus* genomic DNA yielded the same size product also, indicating that there are no introns within the gene. PCR was also performed on human genomic DNA and the same size product was detected, confirming that the *beacon* gene is also found in humans.

25

**EXAMPLE 13****Tissue distribution of *beacon* gene expression in *Psammomys obesus***

The *beacon* gene was expressed at significant levels in all tissues tested in *Psammomys obesus* (hypothalamus, liver, adipose tissue, skeletal muscle (gastrocnemius), heart, pancreas, kidney and spleen).



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**EXAMPLE 14****Hypothalamic *beacon* gene expression**

Hypothalamic expression of the *beacon* gene was significantly correlated with body weight and  
5 plasma insulin concentrations in *Psammomys obesus* (Figure 3). Correlation coefficients of  
*beacon* gene expression with body weight and plasma insulin were all markedly improved after  
six days of leptin administration (Figure 4). Neither Adipose tissue *beacon* gene expression or  
liver *beacon* gene expression were significantly correlated with body weight or circulating  
insulin levels (Figure 5). Expression of *beacon* was not related to obesity in tissues other than  
10 the hypothalamus.

**EXAMPLE 15****Leptin treatment**

15

Leptin treatment resulted in an increase in *beacon* gene expression in the hypothalamus of the  
group A, lean animals but no difference in the obese group B animals (Figure 6). In contrast  
*beacon* gene expression in adipose tissue was significantly reduced following leptin treatment  
in lean animals and similarly unchanged in leptin resistant obese group B animals (Figure 7).

20

**EXAMPLE 16****Nicotine treatment**

Nicotine treatment failed to have any effects on *beacon* gene expression in either hypothalamus  
25 or adipose tissue despite significant effects of nicotine treatment on body weight and food  
intake (Figure 8). These results suggest the effects of leptin treatment on *beacon* gene  
expression are in fact, independent of body weight and leptin specific.

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**EXAMPLE 17****Chronic beacon studies**

Chronic studies were conducted on three groups of *Psammomys obesus*.

5

The *Psammomys obesus* colony can be classified into three groups based on their blood glucose and insulin levels at 12 weeks of age in the fed state (Barnett *et al*, 1994a). In essence, Group A is a lean group of animals, Group B is an obese, non-diabetic group of animals and Group C is an obese, diabetic group of animals.

10

GROUP A	: NORMOGLYCEMIC	- Glucose	$\leq 8$ mM
	NORMOINSULINEMIC	- Insulin	$\leq 150$ mU/mL

15

GROUP B	: NORMOGLYCEMIC	- Glucose	$\leq 8$ mM
	HYPERINSULINEMIC	- Insulin	$>150$ mU/mL

GROUP C	: HYPERGLYCEMIC	- Glucose	$> 8$ mM
	HYPERINSULINEMIC	- Insulin	$> 150$ mU/ml

20

When compared to normoglycemic and normoinsulinemic Group A animals, Group C *Psammomys obesus* develop a number of abnormalities including hyperglycemia, hyperinsulinemia, increased fat stores, body weight, elevated triglyceride and cholesterol levels and hyperleptinemia (Barnett *et al*, 1994b). These changes represent some of the key features

25 of the metabolic syndrome or Syndrome X.

Previous studies have shown that individual animals may progress around the curve in a clockwise direction, from Group A to B to C (Shafir and Gutman, 1993). However the metabolic and physical abnormalities demonstrated in obese Group C *Psammomys obesus* may  
30 be corrected by dietary manipulation. Dietary restriction significantly reduces body weight,

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blood glucose and plasma insulin concentrations (Barnett *et al*, 1994a).

Animals (27 animals total) with ICV cannulas and Alzet pumps were chronically infused with the chemically synthesised short form of beacon (33 amino acids in length, dose = 15ug/day) whilst control animals (28 animals total) were infused with saline. A separate group of animals were treated with neuropeptide Y which is known to increase body weight and food intake. The pumps are designed to deliver solution for 7 days and body weight and food intake were monitored on a daily basis over this time period.

10 The results are shown in Figures 9-11. Figures 9A-C show a comparison between beacon and saline administration to *Psammomys obesus* as monitored by food intake, cumulative food intake and body weight change. Figures 10A-C show food intake per day for Group A, B and C *Psammomys obesus* administered with beacon or saline. Figures 11A-C show cumulative food intake for Group A, B and C *Psammomys obesus* administered with beacon or saline.

15 The chronic studies indicate that beacon acts in a similar fashion to neuropeptide Y by increasing food intake and body weight. Over the 7-day treatment period of the Alzet pump, food intake/day was increased in beacon treated animals compared to saline controls with a maximal increase (~ 20%) at day 5. Similarly, cumulative food intake and body weight was greater in the beacon treated animals compared to saline controls.

When the animals are divided into groups of A, B and C, it is observed that the increases in body weight and food intake following beacon treatment are more pronounced in the C (n=7\_ animals. There was little difference in body weight and food intake for beacon treated A (n=9) or B (n=13) animals compared to saline treated B animals (n=13).

### EXAMPLE 18

#### beacon gene expression

30 Studies were conducted to monitor the effects of expression of the *beacon* gene in *P. obesus* *Psammomys obesus*. The results are shown in Figures 12 to 14. The expression of *beacon* "

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increases in all Group A, B and C *Psammomys obesus* with increased body weight or percentage body fat (Figures 12 and 13). Group A animals expressed the highest level of *beacon* (Figure 14) compared to Group B and C animals. These gene expression studies were conducted using a Perkin Elmer "Real-Time" PCR as described below.

5

Real time PCR performed on the ABI Prism 7700 Sequence Detector system consists of a fluorescent-labelled target probe and forward and reverse primers, all of which are specific for the target sequence. The probe is labelled at the 5' end with a reporter dye and at the 3' end with a quencher dye and while the probe is intact the proximity of the quencher reduces the fluorescence emitted by the reporter. The probe anneals downstream from one of the primer sites and as the PCR progresses, the 5' nuclease activity of *Taq* DNA polymerase cleaves the reporter dye from the probe. Once separated from the quencher, the reporter dye emits a characteristic fluorescence.

15 The ABI Prism 7700 Sequence Detector has a built-in thermal cycler and a laser directed *via* fibre optic cables to each of 96 sample wells. Fluorescence emission data produced during PCR is collected once every few seconds and travels back to the CCD camera detector. Software within the Sequence Detector system analyses the data and amplification plots are produced for each sample allowing us to monitor the entire PCR process for amplification of any specific target sequence. Reactions are categorised by the point in time during cycling when amplification of a product is first detected rather than the amount of product formed after a fixed number of cycles. The higher the amount of target starting material, the sooner a significant increase in fluorescence will be observed.

25 The probe and primer sequences used for the *beacon* gene expression studies are shown below;

Probe            6FAM-TGGTAATAAAGCTCCAGGTTTCATCCCATCG-TAMRA  
[SEQ ID NO:10]

(6FAM=fluorescent reporter dye and TAMRA=quencher dye)

30 Forward        CAAACTGGCACTCGTTGGAA [SEQ ID NO:11]

Primer

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Reverse GTTGGGCAAGGTGGAGGAA [SEQ ID NO:12]

Primer

**EXAMPLE 19****5 Effects of insulin on *beacon* gene expression**

The effects of insulin on *beacon* gene expression are shown in Figure 15. The data show that increasing levels of insulin results in a decrease in beacon gene expression. These results show that beacon gene expression is affected in metabolically disturbed animals and insulin retards  
10 *beacon* expression.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention described herein is susceptible to variations and modifications other than those specifically described. It is to be understood that the invention includes all such variations and modifications. The invention also includes all of  
15 the steps, features, compositions and compounds referred to or indicated in this specification, individually or collectively, and any and all combinations of any two or more of said steps or features.

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(1) GENERAL INFORMATION:

- (i) APPLICANT: (Other than US) INTERNATIONAL DIABETES INSTITUTE and  
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY  
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- (ii) TITLE OF INVENTION: A NOVEL GENE AND USES THEREFOR
- (iii) NUMBER OF SEQUENCES: 14
- (iv) CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS:  
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(E) COUNTRY: AUSTRALIA  
(F) ZIP: 3000
- (v) COMPUTER READABLE FORM:  
(A) MEDIUM TYPE: Floppy disk  
(B) COMPUTER: IBM PC compatible  
(C) OPERATING SYSTEM: PC-DOS/MS-DOS  
(D) SOFTWARE: PatentIn Release #1.0, Version #1.25
- (vi) CURRENT APPLICATION DATA:  
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(A) APPLICATION NUMBER: PP0323/97  
(B) FILING DATE: 11-NOV-1997  
(C) CLASSIFICATION:
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650690 0657660

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## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:1:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:  
 (A) LENGTH: 342 base pairs  
 (B) TYPE: nucleic acid  
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single  
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

- (ix) FEATURE:  
 (A) NAME/KEY: CDS  
 (B) LOCATION: 29..247

## (xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:1:

GTTCCAGGAG ATTACAGCTC CAGCCACA ATG ATT GAG GTG GTT TGC AAC GAC	52
Met Ile Glu Val Val Cys Asn Asp	
1 5	
CGT CTA GGA AAG AAA GTC CGC GTT AAG TGC AAC ACC GAT GAC ACC ATC	100
Arg Leu Gly Lys Lys Val Arg Val Lys Cys Asn Thr Asp Asp Thr Ile	
10 15 20	
GGG GAC TTG AAG AAA CTG ATA GCG GCC CAA ACT GGC ACT CGT TGG AAT	148
Gly Asp Leu Lys Lys Leu Ile Ala Ala Gln Thr Gly Thr Arg Trp Asn	
25 30 35 40	
AAG ATC GTT CTT AAA AAG TGG TAC ACG ATT TTT AAG GAC CAT GTA TCT	196
Lys Ile Val Leu Lys Lys Trp Tyr Thr Ile Phe Lys Asp His Val Ser	
45 50 55	
CTG GGA GAT TAT GAA ATC CAC GAT GGG ATG AAC CTG GAG CTT TAT TAC	244
Leu Gly Asp Tyr Glu Ile His Asp Gly Met Asn Leu Glu Leu Tyr Tyr	
60 65 70	
CAG TAGAGGGGAA TTCCTCCACC TTGCCCAACC TTGCTTTCCT CTCCCATGGC	297
Gln	
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0033930-063069

- 50 -

## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:2:

## (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 73 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

## (ii) MOLECULE TYPE: protein

## (xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:2:

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Met Ile Glu Val Val Cys Asn Asp Arg Leu Gly Lys Lys Val Arg Val
 1             5             10             15
Lys Cys Asn Thr Asp Asp Thr Ile Gly Asp Leu Lys Lys Leu Ile Ala
          20             25             30
Ala Gln Thr Gly Thr Arg Trp Asn Lys Ile Val Leu Lys Lys Trp Tyr
          35             40             45
Thr Ile Phe Lys Asp His Val Ser Leu Gly Asp Tyr Glu Ile His Asp
          50             55             60
Gly Met Asn Leu Glu Leu Tyr Tyr Gln
65             70

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## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:3:

## (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 391 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

## (ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

## (xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:3:

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GCCCCTGAAC TTCTTTGACT ATCGCCGGGT TTGACCGTGA GCAACCTTAT TCTAGCAAGA      180
ATTTTTCACC ATGTGCTAAA AATTCCTGGT ACATAGAGAC CCTCTAATAC TTTAGGTGCT      240
ACCCTACTTG GACCTCGAAA TAATGGTCAT CTCCCCTTAA GGAGGTGGAA CGGGTTGGAA      300
CGAAAGGAGA GGGTACCGAG TAAATTGTGA CAACATCTAC GAGTAAAAAA ACAATTCA      360
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(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:4:

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- (A) LENGTH: 16 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:4:

AAGCTTTTTT TTTTGT

16

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:5:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 13 base pairs
- (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:5:

AAGCTTCGGG TAA

13

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:6:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:  
 (A) LENGTH: 20 base pairs  
 (B) TYPE: nucleic acid  
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single  
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:6:

AGTCCGCGTT AAGTGCAACA

20

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:7:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:  
 (A) LENGTH: 20 base pairs  
 (B) TYPE: nucleic acid  
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single  
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:7:

CTCCAGGTTC ATCCCATCGT

20

- 52 -

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:8:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:
  - (A) LENGTH: 20 base pairs
  - (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
  - (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
  - (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:8:

GGCTACAGCT TCACCACCAC

20

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:9:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:
  - (A) LENGTH: 13 base pairs
  - (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
  - (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
  - (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:9:

GCTTGCTGAT CCACATCTGC

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(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:10:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:
  - (A) LENGTH: 30 base pairs
  - (B) TYPE: nucleic acid
  - (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
  - (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:10:

TGGTAATAAA GCTCCAGGTT CATCCCATCG

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660660-0657660

- 53 -

## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:11:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:  
 (A) LENGTH: 20 base pairs  
 (B) TYPE: nucleic acid  
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single  
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:11:

CAAACCTGGCA CTCGTTGGAA

20

## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:12:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:  
 (A) LENGTH: 19 base pairs  
 (B) TYPE: nucleic acid  
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single  
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:12:

GTTGGGCAAG GTGGAGGAA

19

## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:13:

- (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:  
 (A) LENGTH: 102 base pairs  
 (B) TYPE: nucleic acid  
 (C) STRANDEDNESS: single  
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: DNA

(ix) FEATURE:

- (A) NAME/KEY: CDS  
 (B) LOCATION: 1..102

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:13:

ATG	ATC	GAG	GTT	GTT	TGC	AAC	GAC	CGT	CTG	GGG	AAA	AAG	GTC	CNC	GTT	
Met	Ile	Glu	Val	Val	Cys	Asn	Asp	Arg	Leu	Gly	Lys	Lys	Val	Xaa	Val	
1				5					10					15		

48

AAA	TGC	AAC	ACG	GAT	GAT	ACC	ATC	GGG	GAC	CTT	AAG	AAG	CTG	ATT	GCA	
Lys	Cys	Asn	Thr	Asp	Asp	Thr	Ile	Gly	Asp	Leu	Lys	Lys	Leu	Ile	Ala	
			20					25						30		

96

GCC TAA  
 Ala \*

102

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## (2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO:14:

## (i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 33 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

## (ii) MOLECULE TYPE: protein

## (xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO:14:

Met	Ile	Glu	Val	Val	Cys	Asn	Asp	Arg	Leu	Gly	Lys	Lys	Val	Xaa	Val
1				5					10					15	
Lys	Cys	Asn	Thr	Asp	Asp	Thr	Ile	Gly	Asp	Leu	Lys	Lys	Leu	Ile	Ala
			20					25					30		

Ala

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CLAIMS:

1. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a sequence of nucleotides encoding or complementary to a sequence encoding a protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in larger amounts in hypothalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.
2. An isolated nucleic acid molecule according to claim 1 wherein the nucleic acid molecule encodes an amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 or an amino acid sequence having at least 60% similarity to all or a part thereof or is a mimetic thereof or a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing to said nucleic acid molecule under low stringency conditions at 42°C.
3. An isolated nucleic acid molecule according to claim 2 wherein said nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or a nucleotide sequence having at least about 30% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 and/or is capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C.
4. An isolated nucleic acid molecule according to claim 3 having the identifying characteristics of the gene "*beacon*".
5. An isolated nucleic acid molecule according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the animal is a human or *Psammomys obesus*.
6. An isolated nucleic acid molecule according to claim 3 ligated or fused to a nucleic acid vector molecule.
7. An isolated protein or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof which is produced in a larger amount in hyperthalamus tissue of obese animals compared to lean animals.

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8. An isolated protein according to claim 7 comprising an amino acid sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14 or an amino acid sequence having at least 30% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:14.
9. An isolated protein according to claim 8 wherein said protein is encoded by a nucleotide sequence substantially as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 or a nucleotide sequence having at least 60% similarity to all or part of SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 and/or is capable of hybridizing to SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:13 under low stringency conditions at 42°C.
10. A composition comprising a protein according to any one of claims 7 to 9 or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof or an agonist or antagonist thereof together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents.
11. A method for treating a subject comprising administering to said subject a treatment effective amount of a protein according to any one of claims 7 to 9 or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic thereof or a genetic sequence encoding same or an agonist or antagonist of said protein or genetic sequence for a time and under conditions sufficient to effect treatment.
12. A method according to claim 11 wherein the treatment is in respect of obesity, anorexia, weight maintenance, energy imbalance, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, dyslipidemia, hypertension and/or insulin resistance.
13. A method of treatment or preventing obesity in a subject, said method comprising administering to said subject an antagonist of beacon or *beacon* gene expression for a time and under conditions sufficient to reduce the levels of beacon in hypothalamus tissue in said subject.
14. An antibody to a protein according to any one of claims 7 to 9 or a derivative, homologue, analogue or mimetic of said protein.

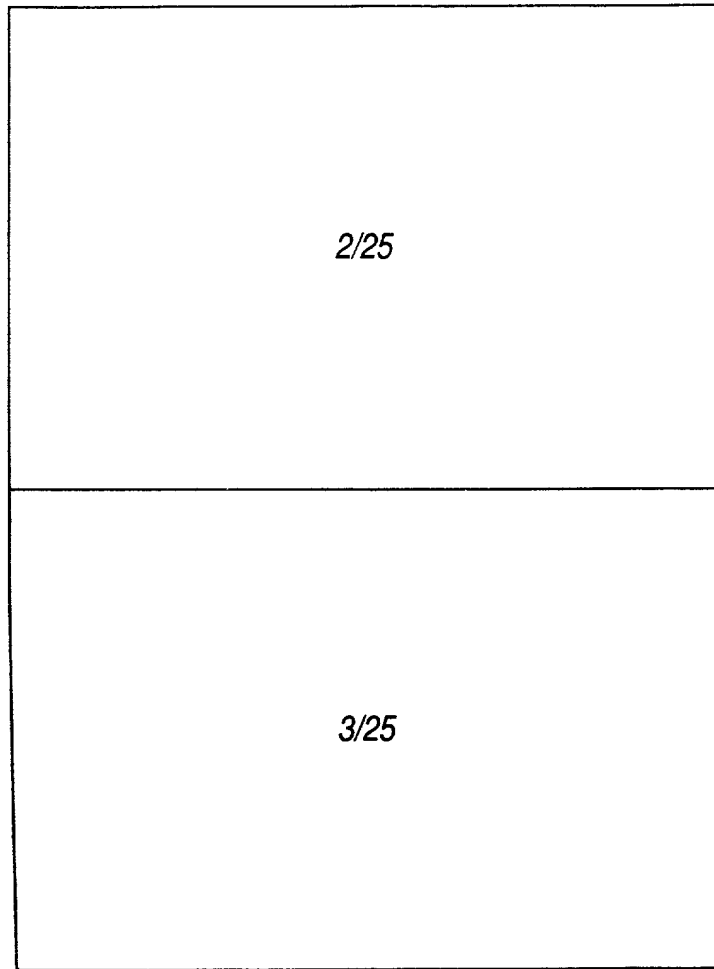
15. An antibody according to claim 14 wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.
16. Use of a protein as defined by any one of claims 7 to 9 or a genetic sequence as defined by any one of claims 1 to 6 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of one or more of obesity, anorexia, energy imbalance or diabetes.
17. A method of detecting beacon or a derivative or homologue thereof in a biological sample, said method comprising contacting said biological sample with an antibody specific for beacon or its antigenic derivatives or homologues for a time and under conditions sufficient for a complex to form and then detecting said complex.
18. A method for detecting expression of *beacon* or its derivatives or homologues in a tissue sample from a subject, said method comprising detecting the presence or amount of *beacon* mRNA in said sample.
19. A method according to claim 17 or 18 for use in determining the risk of development of obesity, anorexia, energy imbalance, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, dyslipidemia, hypertension and/or insulin resistance.

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**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates generally to a nucleic acid molecule which encodes a protein associated with the modulation of obesity, diabetes and metabolic energy levels. More particularly, the present invention is directed to a nucleic acid molecule and a recombinant and purified naturally occurring protein encoded thereby and their use in therapeutic and diagnostic protocols for conditions such as obesity, diabetes and energy imbalance. The subject nucleic acid molecule and protein and their derivatives, homologues, analogues and mimetics are proposed as therapeutic and diagnostic agents for obesity, diabetes and energy imbalance.

1/25



*Fig. 1A*

2/25

50 60  
K I V L K K W Y T I F K D H V S L G D Y  
AAGATCGTTCTTAAAAAGTGGTACACGATTTTAAAGGACCATGTATCTCTGGGAGATTAT  
TTCTAGCAAGAAATTTTCACCATGTGCTAAATAATTCCTGGTACATAGAGACCCCTCTAATA

70  
E I H D G M N L E L Y Y Q STOP  
GAAATCCACGATGGGATGAACCTGGAGCTTTATTACCAGTAGAGGGGAATTCCTCCACC  
CTTTAGTGCTACCCCTACTTGGACCTCGAAATAATGGTCATCTCCCTTAAGGAGGTGG  
TTGCCCAACCTTGCTTTCCTCTCCCATGGCTCATTTAACACTGTTGTAGATGCTCATTTT  
AACGGTTGGAACGAAAGGAGAGGGTACCGAGTAAATTGTGACAAACATCTACGAGTAAAAA

AACAAATTCACATGAATAAAACTTTGATGCTGCAAAAAAAA 3'  
TTGTTAAGTGTA 5'

---

Fig. 1A (i)

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	50	60
K I V L K K W Y T I F K D H V S L G D Y		
AAAGATCGTTCTTAAAAAGTGGTACACGATTTTAAAGGACCATGTATCTCTGGGAGATTAT		
TTCTAGCAAGAAATTTTCACCATGTGCTAAAAAATTCCTGTACATAGAGACCCCTCTAATA		

[illegible]

AACCAATTCACATGAATAAAACTTTGATGCTGCATAAAAAA 3'  
 TTGTTAAGTGTA 5'

**Fig. 1A (ii)**

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ATG ATC GAG GTT GTT TGC AAC GAC CGT CTG GGG AAA AAG GTC CNC 45  
 Met Ile Glu Val Val Cys Asn Asp Arg Leu Gly Lys Lys Val Xaa  
 1 5 10 15

GTT AAA TGC AAC ACG GAT GAT ACC ATC GGG GAC CTT AAG AAG CTG 90  
 Val Lys Cys Asn Thr Asp Asp Thr Ile Gly Asp Leu Lys Lys Leu  
 20 25 30

ATT GCA GCC TAA 102  
 Ile Ala Ala \*

Fig.1B



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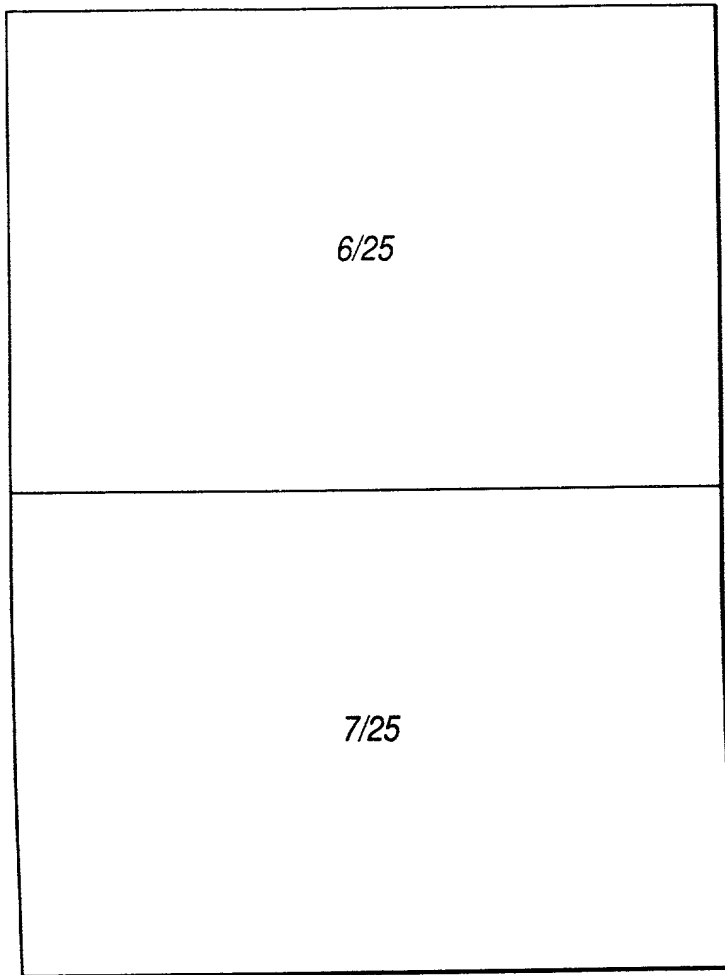


Fig.2A

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AMINO ACID	ALIGNMENTS				
A.	10	20	30	40	50
	*	*	*	*	*
Beacon	MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWNKIVLKKWYTI				
Human	MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWNKIVLKKWYTI				
Mouse	MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWNKIVLKKWYTI				
C.elegans	MIEITVNDRLGKKVRIKCNPSDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWEKIVLKKWYTI				
F.hepatica	DRLGKKVRVKCNPTDKVGDLLKKLIAAQGTGTAPERIVLKKWYTI				
Rice	MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWNKIVLKKWYTI				
S.cerev	MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWNKIVLKKWYTI				

Fig.2A (i)

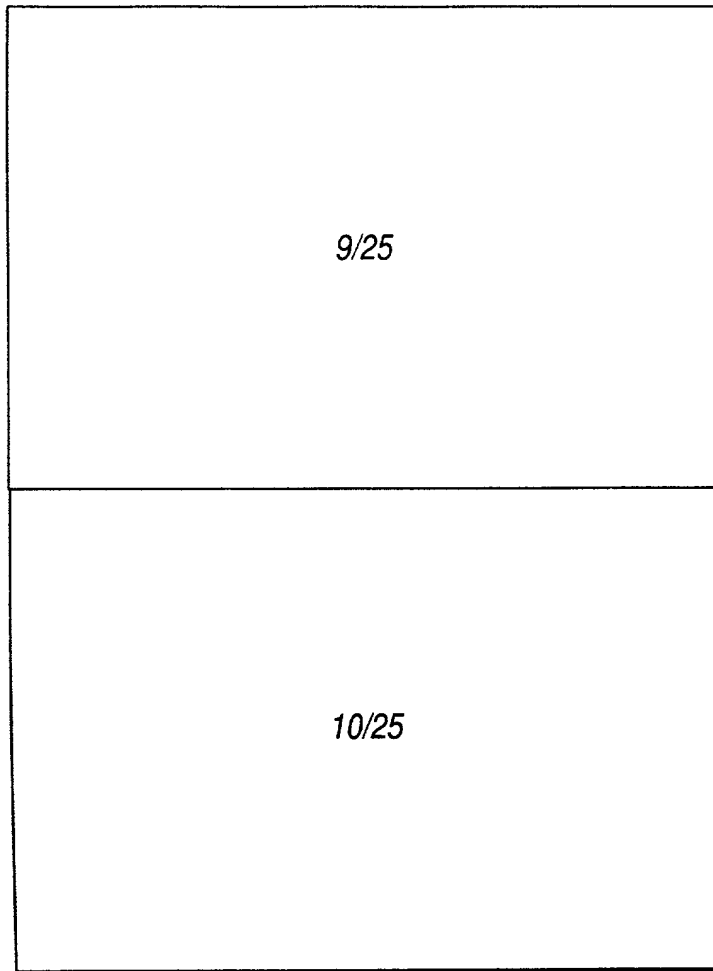
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	60	70
	*	*
Beacon	FKDHVSLGDYEIHDGMNLELYYQ	
Human	FKDHVSLGDYEIHDGMNLELYYQ	
Mouse	FKDHVSLGDYEIHDGMNLELYYQ	
C.elegans	YKDHIITLMDYEIHEGFNFELYQ	
F.hepatica	YKDHVTLRDYEINDGMNLELYYQ	
Rice	YKDHIITLADYEIHDGMGLELYYN	
S.cerev	LKDHIKLEDYEVHDQTNLELYYL	
Percentage	homologies	
Human	73/73 = 100%	
Mouse	73/73 = 100%	
C.elegans	59/73 = 81%	
F.hepatica	54/66 = 82%	
Rice	58/73 = 79%	
S.cerev	46/73 = 63%	

Fig.2A (ii)

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*Fig.2B*

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இ

Human ubiquitin

10	20	30	40	50
*	*	*	*	*

Beacon  
MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTGRWNKI VLKKWYTI
$$\begin{array}{c} \text{---} \\ + \\ + \\ \text{---} \\ + \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ + \\ + \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ + \\ + \\ + \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array}$$

Ugiquitin MQIFVKT LTGKTTITLEVEPSDTIENVKAKIQDKEGIPPDQQRLIFAGKQ

60	*
70	*

Beacon  
FKDHVSLGDYEIHDGMNLELYYQ
$$\begin{array}{c} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ + \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ + \\ \text{---} \\ + \\ \text{---} \end{array}$$

Ubiquitin LEDGRTLSDYNIQESTLHLVLRGG

Amino acid homology  $18/73 = 25\%$

positives (similar amino acids)  $29/73 = 40\%$ 

**Fig.2B (i)**

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Ubiquitin-like protein 8 (A. thaliana)

10 20 30 40 50  
\* \* \* \*

Beacon MIEVVCNDRLGKKVRVKCNTDDTIGDLKKLIAAQGTRWNKIVLKKWYTI

|| + ++ + ||| ++|+ | + | ++ + | +

A. thaliana GKTIILEVESDITIANVKEKIQVKEGIKPDQQMLIFFGQQ

Beacon FKDHVSLGDYEIHDGMNLELYYQ

+ | + ||||| + || |

A. thaliana LEDGVTLGDYDIHKKSTLYL

Amino acid homology 19/60 = 32%

Positives (similar amino acids) 34/60 = 57%

Fig.2B (ii)

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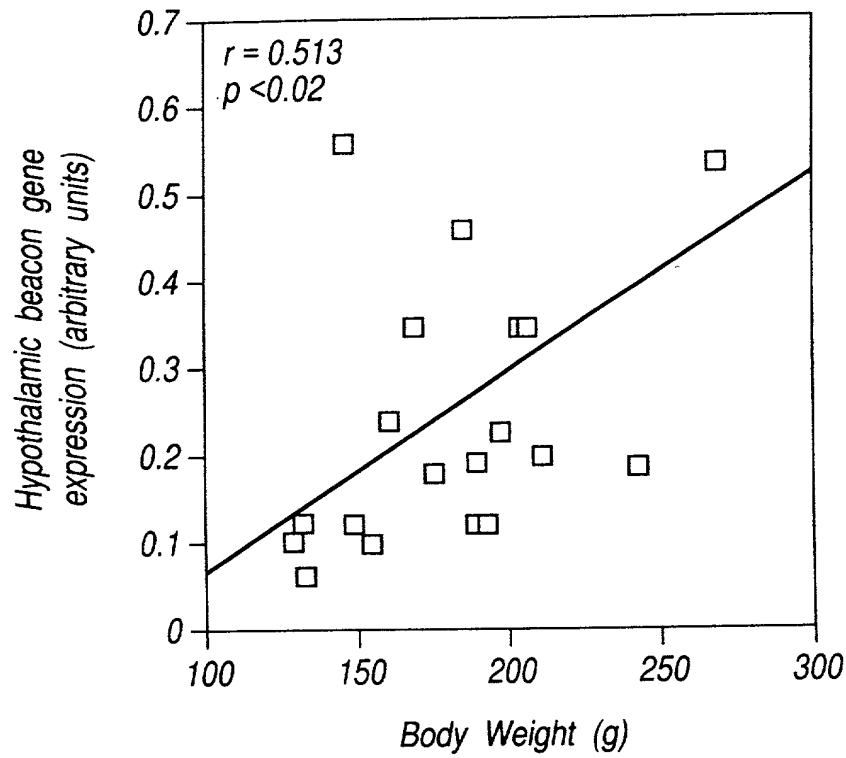


Fig.3A

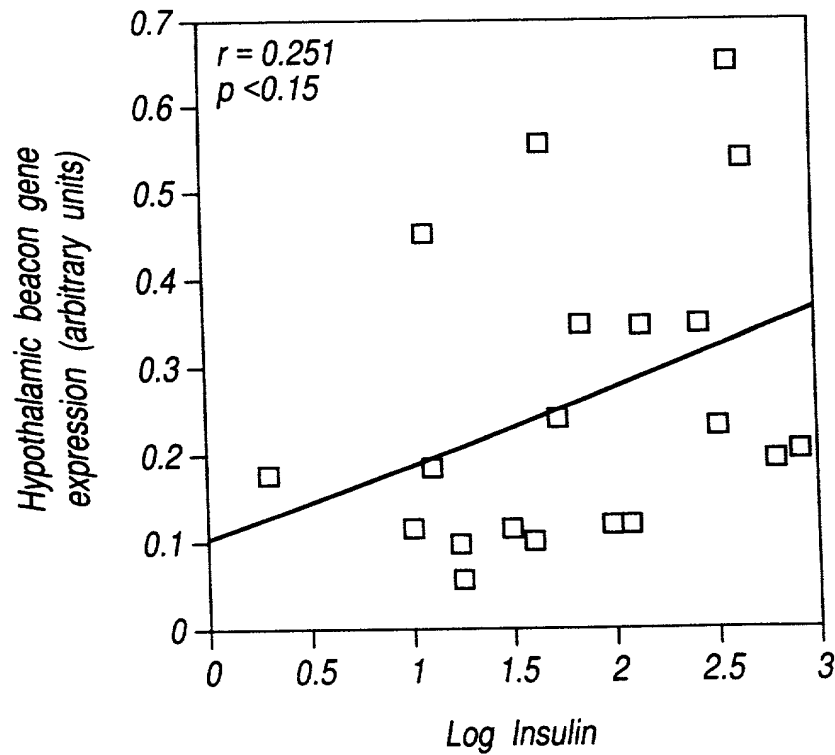


Fig.3B

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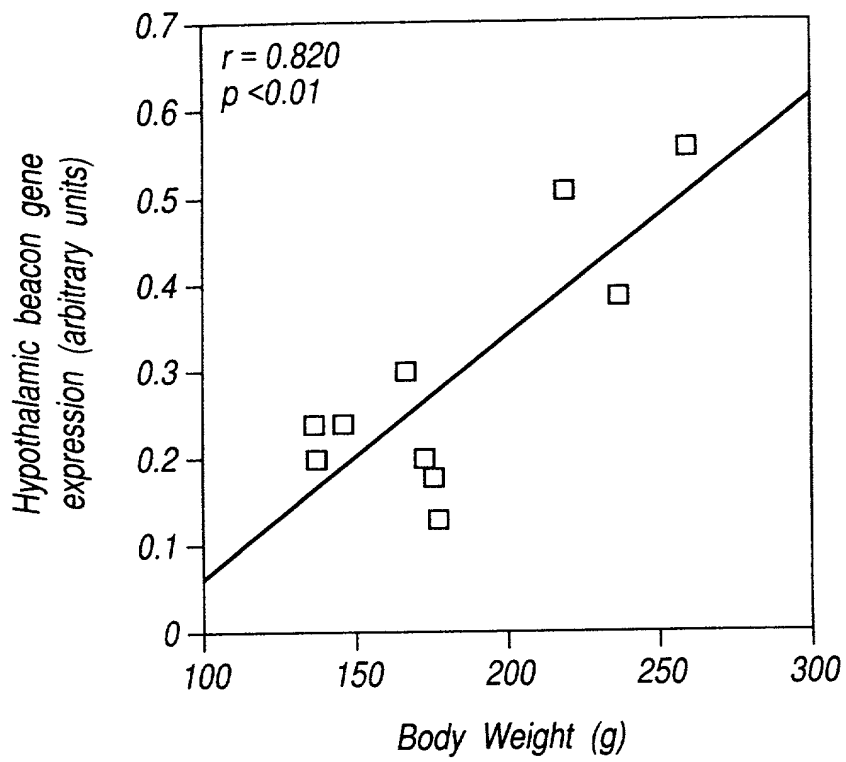


Fig.4A

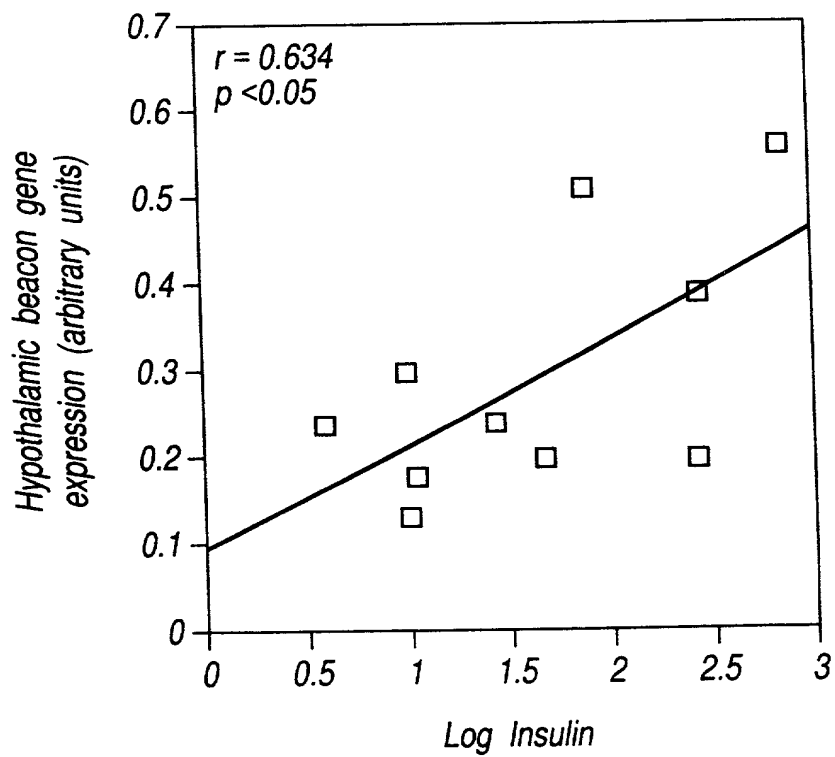


Fig.4B



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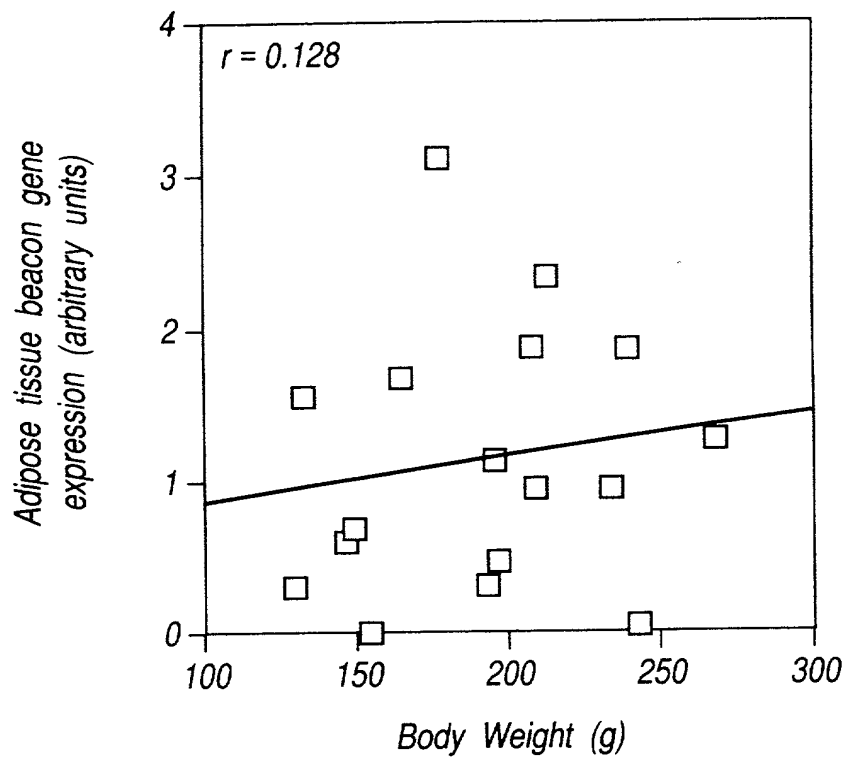


Fig.5A

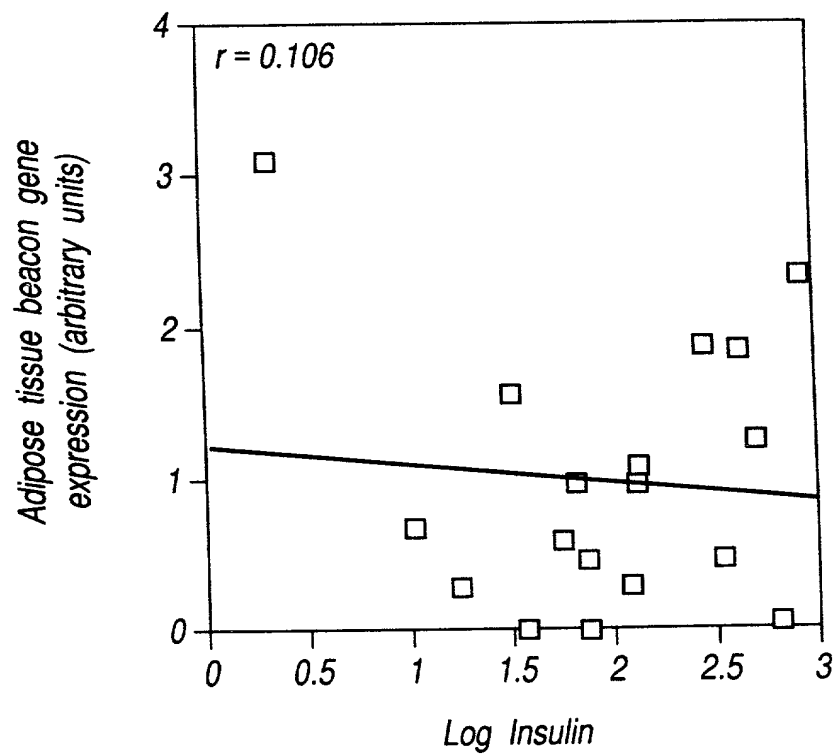


Fig.5B

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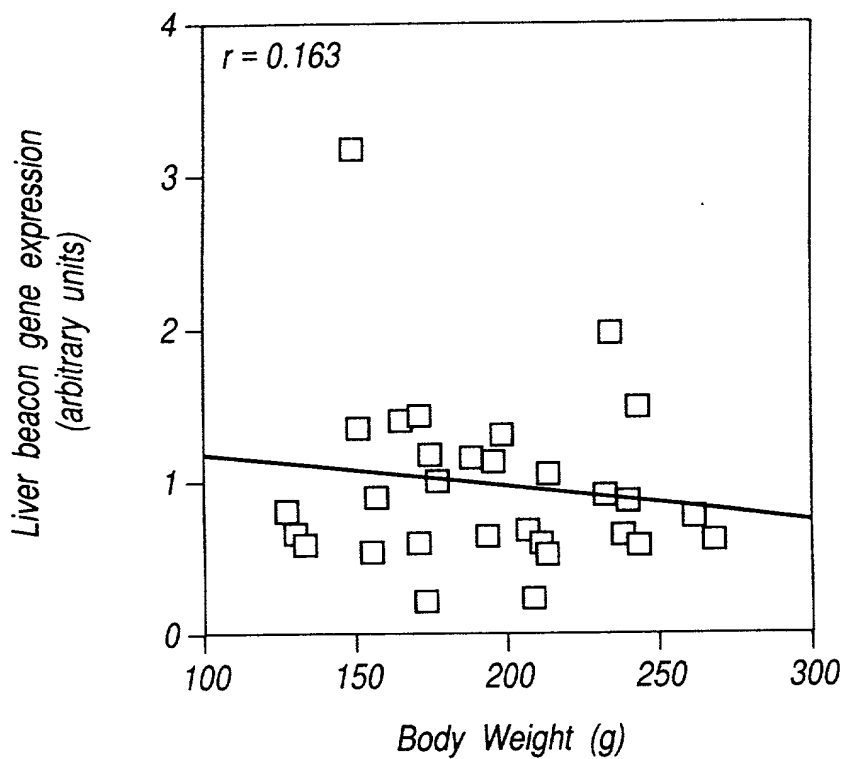


Fig.5C

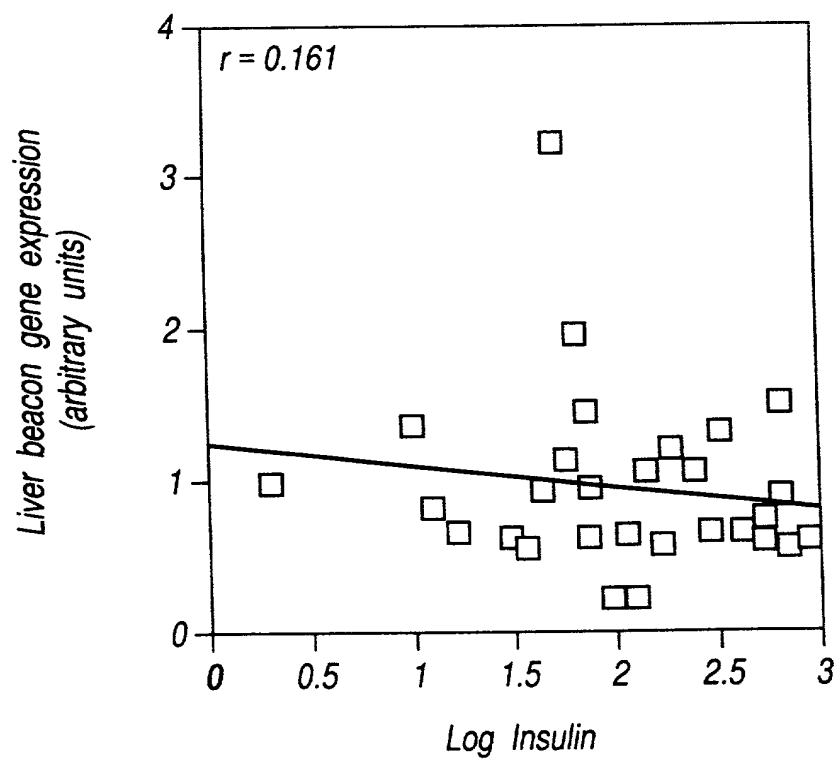


Fig.5D

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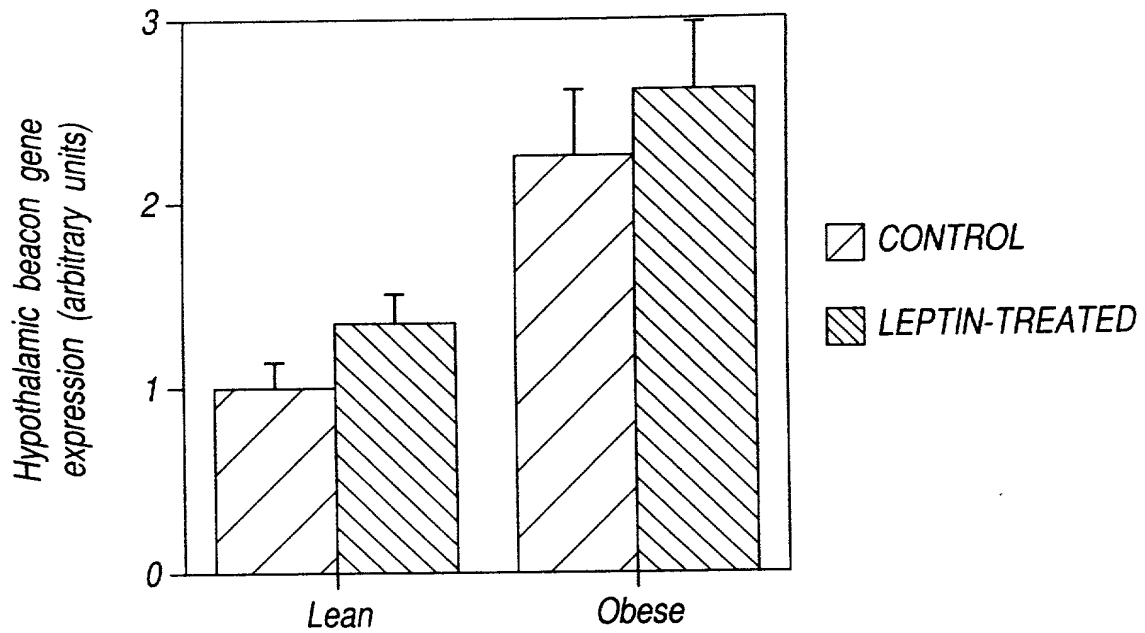


Fig.6

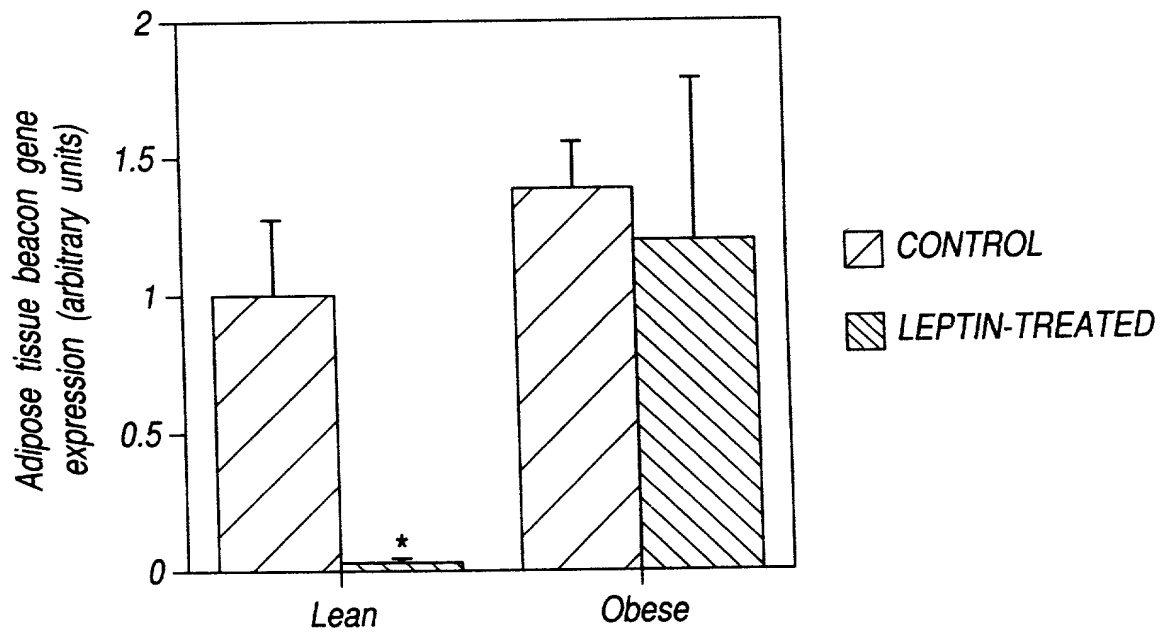
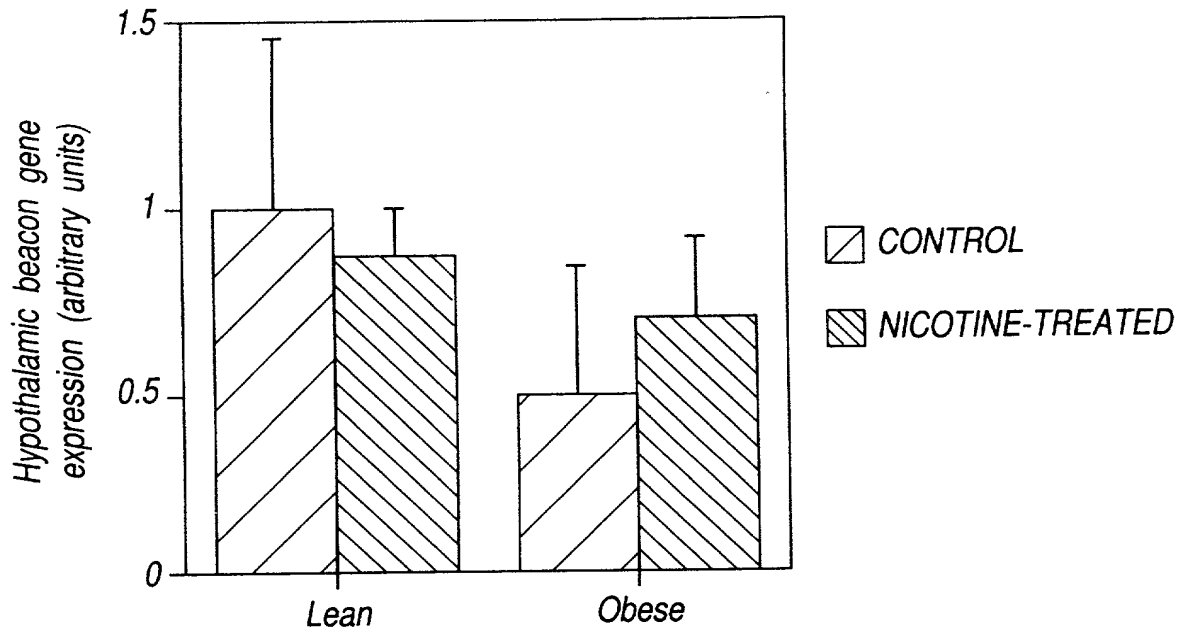
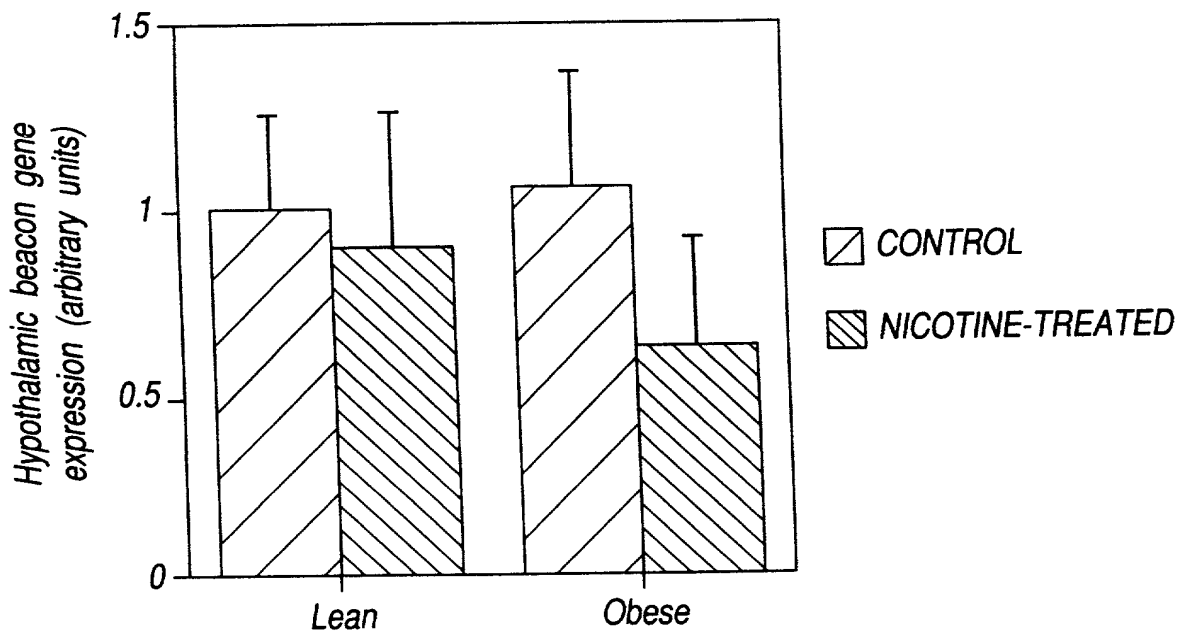


Fig.7

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*Fig.8A**Fig.8B*

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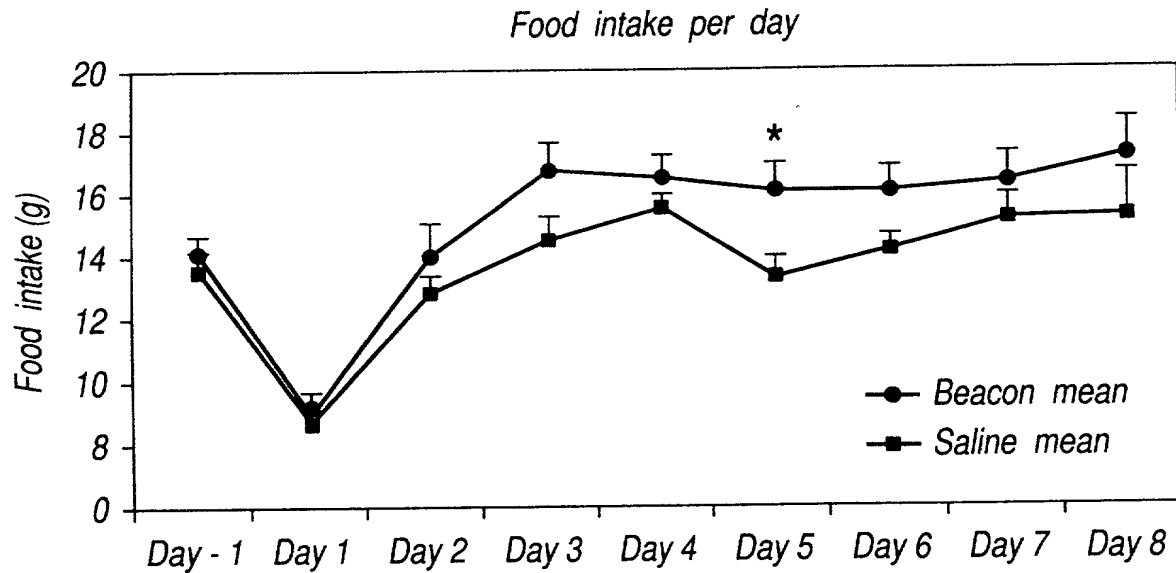


Fig.9A

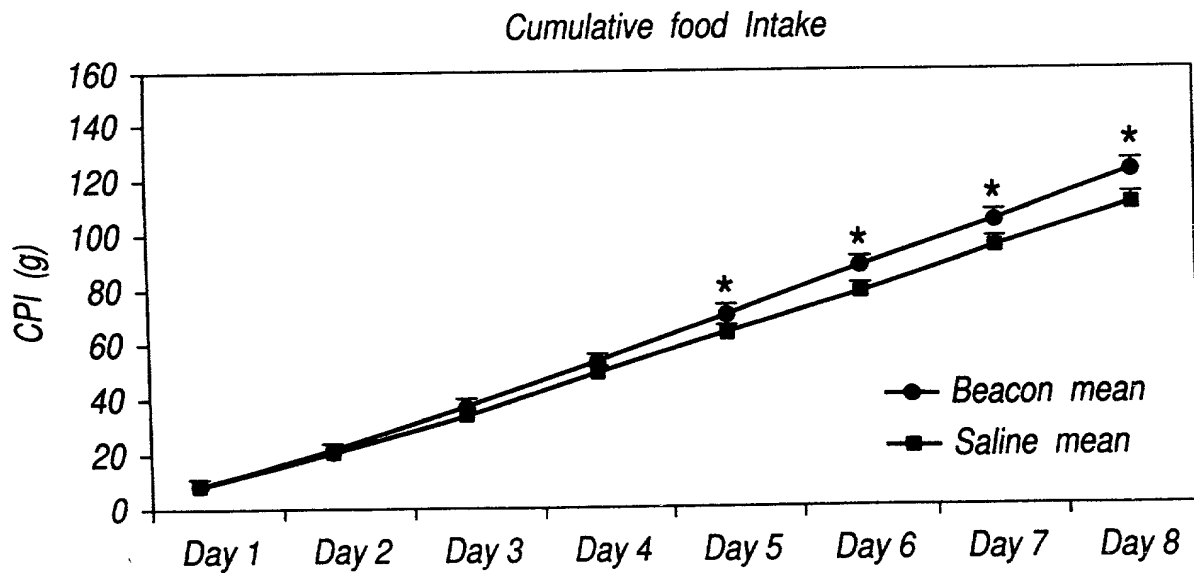
\* = significant,  $p < 0.05$ 

Fig.9B

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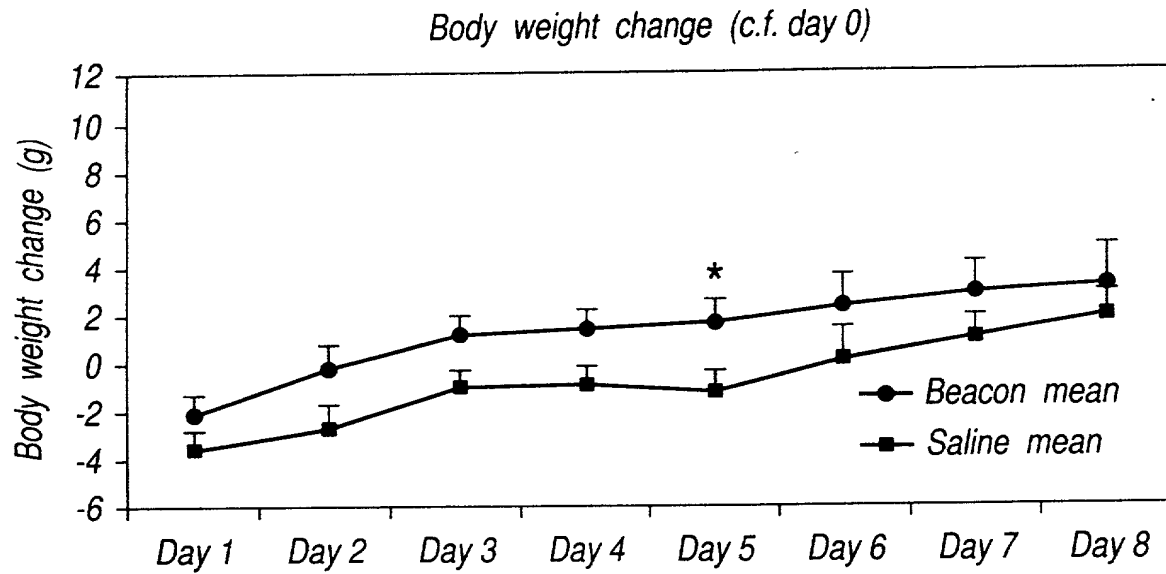


Fig.9C

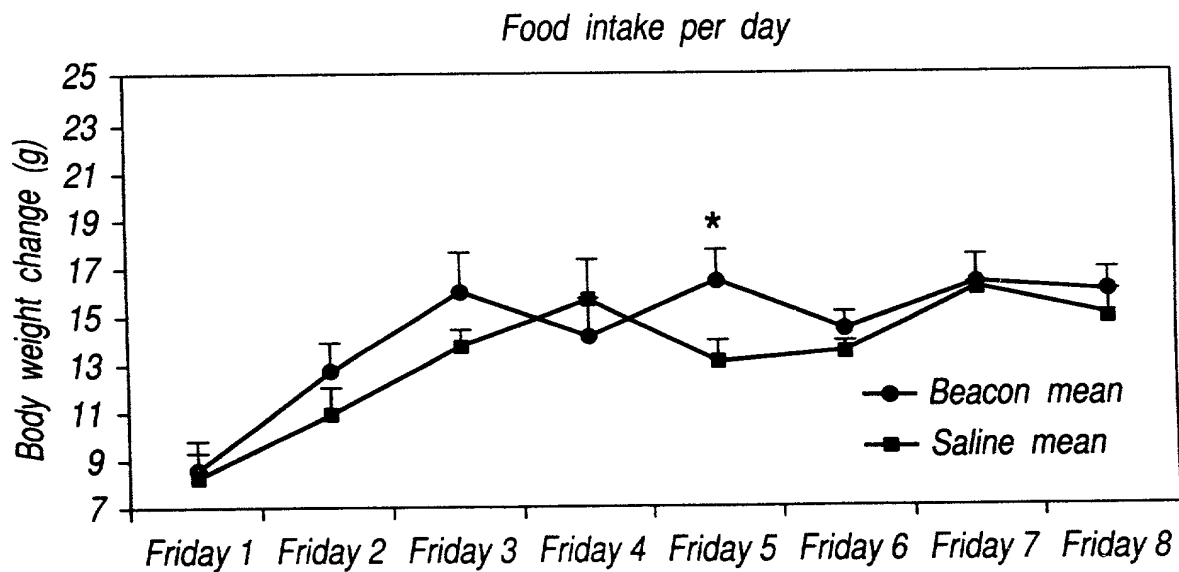


Fig.10A

\* = significant,  $p < 0.05$

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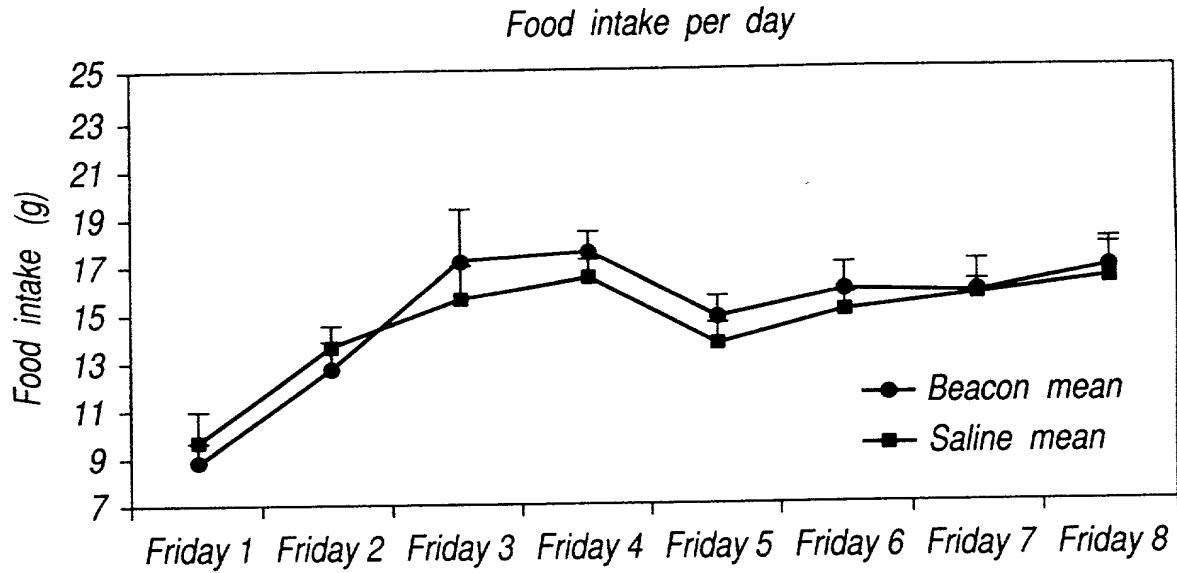


Fig.10B

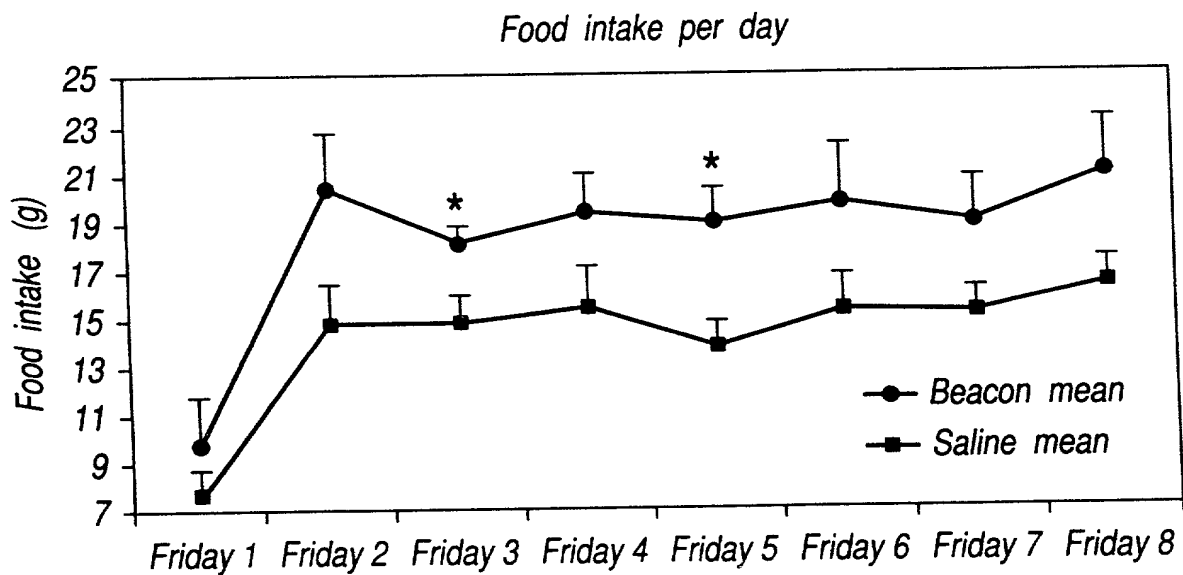


Fig.10C

\* = significant,  $p < 0.05$

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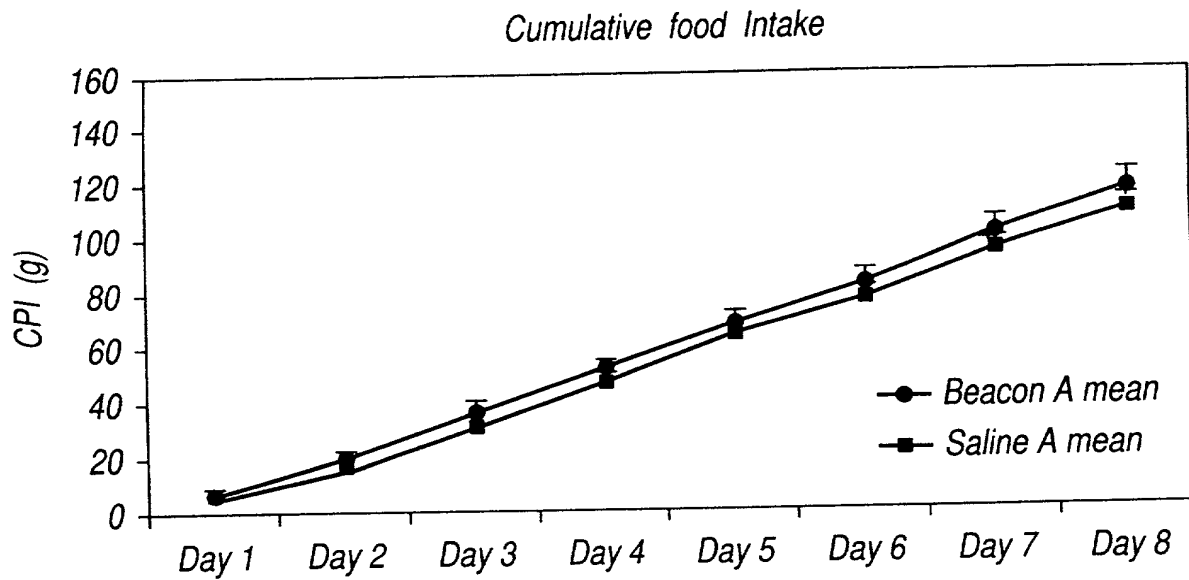


Fig.11A

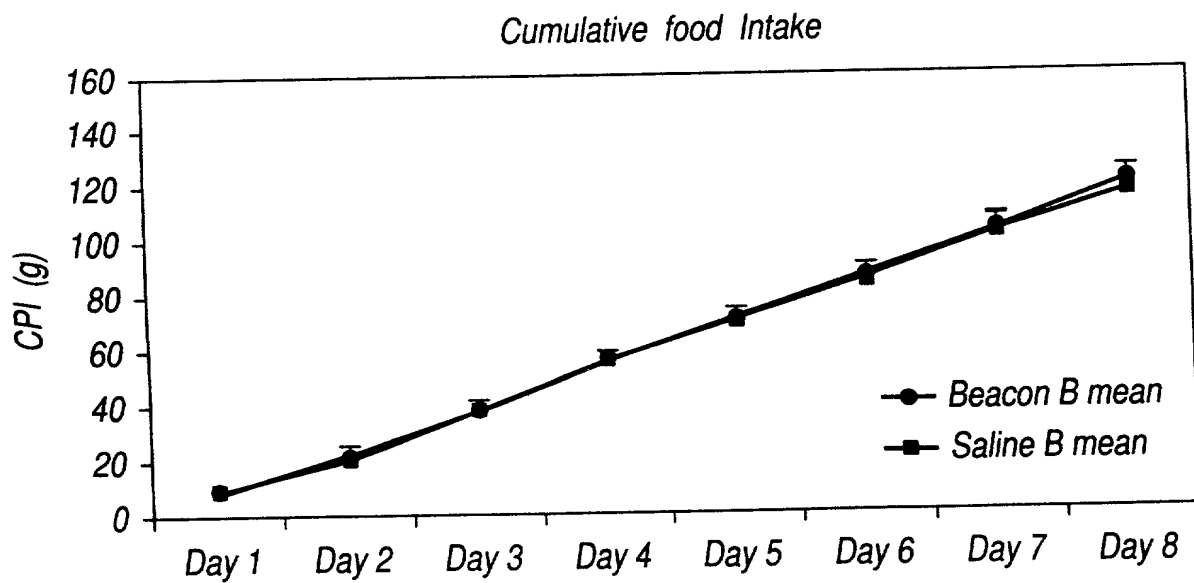
\* = significant,  $p < 0.05$ 

Fig.11B



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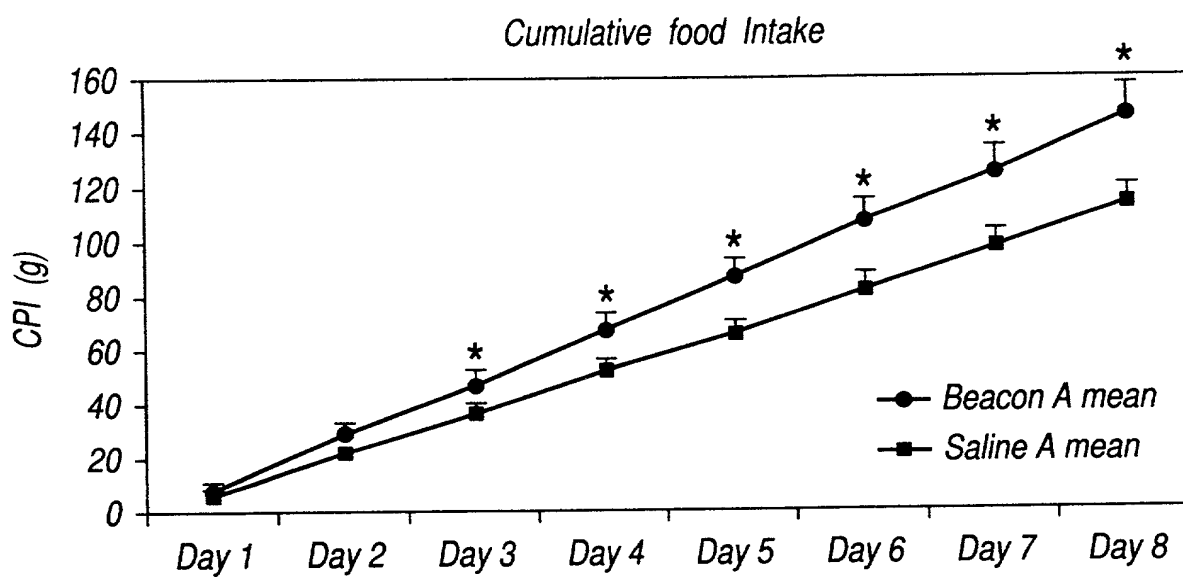


Fig.11C

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Beacon v. Body Weight and % Fat in Group A animals

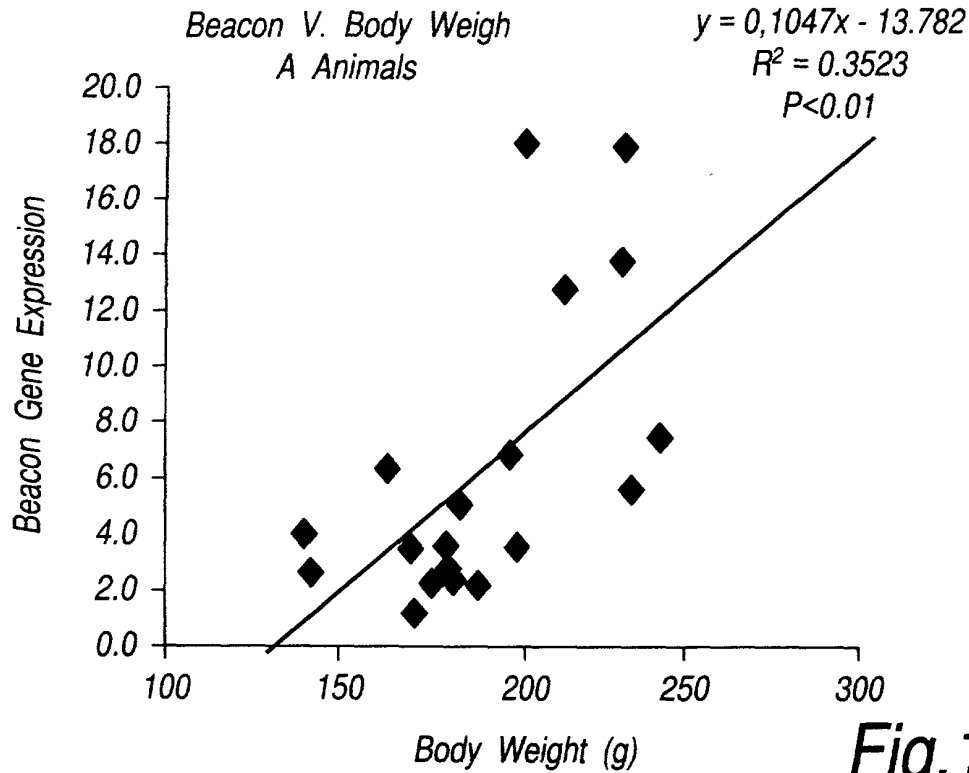


Fig. 12A

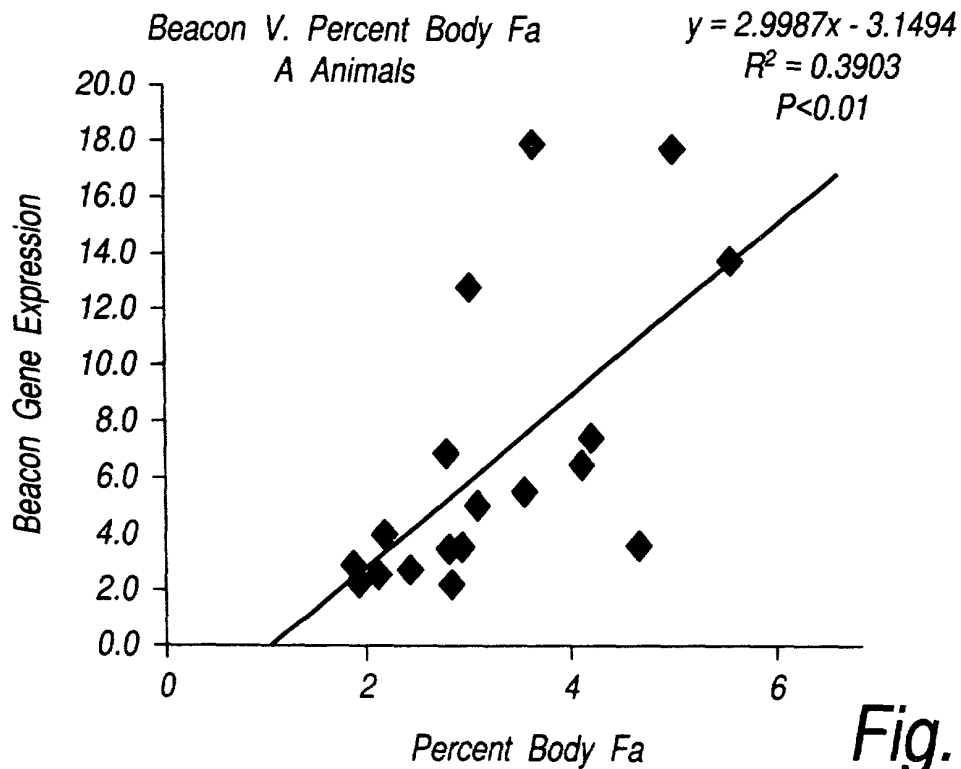


Fig. 12B

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Beacon v. % Body Fat

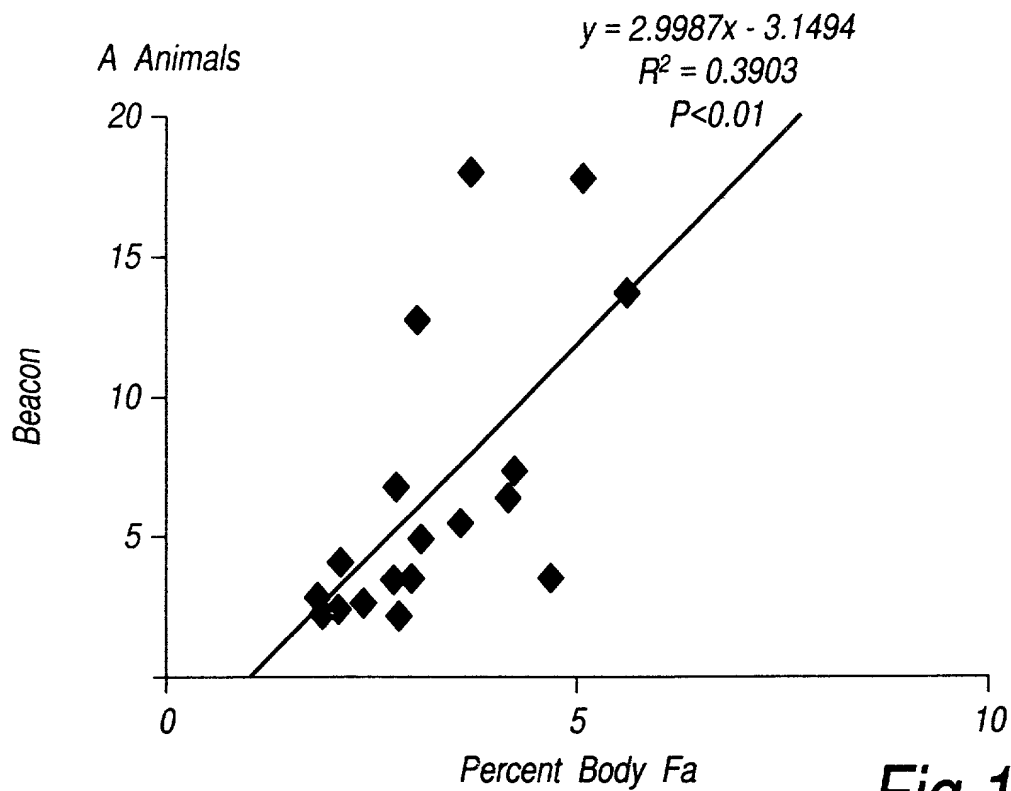


Fig. 13A

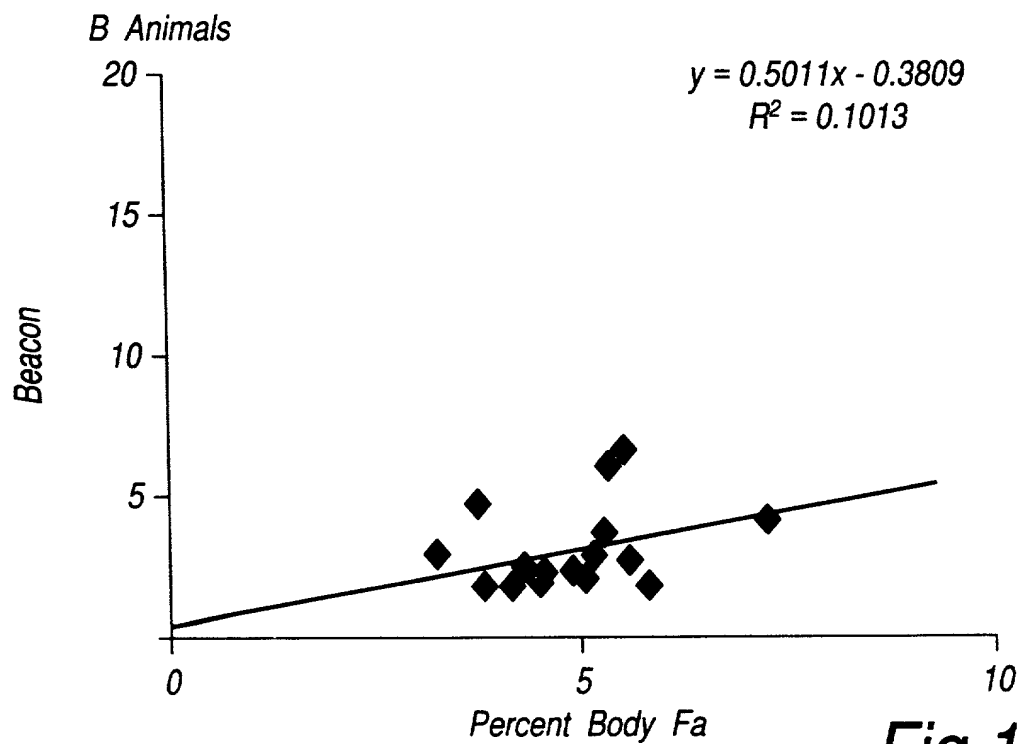


Fig. 13B

## COMBINED DECLARATION FOR PATENT APPLICATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

(Includes Reference to PCT International Applications)

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

"A novel gene and uses therefor"

the specification of which (check only one item below):

☐ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed as United States application

Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_\_

and was amended

on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable).

☒ was filed as PCT international application

Number PCT/AU98/00902

30 October 1998

on \_\_\_\_\_

and was amended under PCT Article 19

on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America listed below and have also identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed by me on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed:

## PRIOR FOREIGN/PCT APPLICATION(S) AND ANY PRIORITY CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 119:

COUNTRY (if PCT indicate PCT )	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING (day, month year)	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 35 USC 119
AUSTRALIA	PP 0117	31 October 1997	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
AUSTRALIA	pp 0323	11 November 1997	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

# Combined Declaration For Patent Application and Power of Attorney (Continued)

(Includes Reference to PCT International Applications)

ATTORNEY'S OFFICE NUMBER

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) or PCT international application(s) designating the United States of America that is/are listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in that/those prior application(s) in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application(s) and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

## PRIOR U.S. APPLICATIONS OR PCT INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS DESIGNATING THE U.S. FOR BENEFIT UNDER 35 U.S.C. 120:

U.S. APPLICATIONS		STATUS (Check one)		
U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER	U.S. FILING DATE	PATENTED	PENDING	ABANDONED

PCT APPLICATIONS DESIGNATING THE U.S.					
PCT APPLICATION NO.	PCT FILING DATE	U.S. SERIAL NUMBERS ASSIGNED (if any)			

**POWER OF ATTORNEY:** As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

Send Correspondence to: Morrison & Foerster LLP,  
2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington,  
D.C., 2006-1888, U.S.A.  
40006

Direct Telephone Calls to:  
 (name and telephone number)

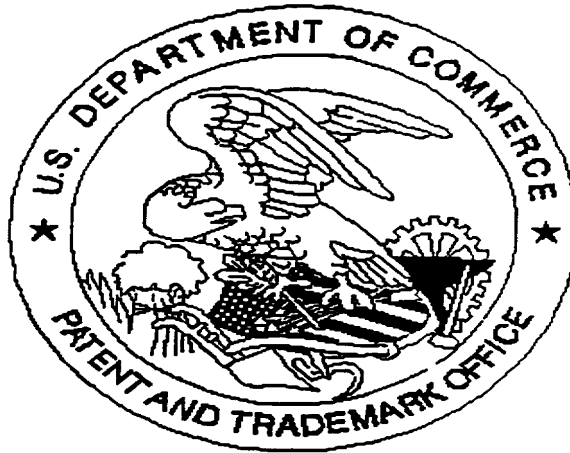
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	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	CITY	STATE & ZIP CODE/COUNTRY	
202	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME	SECOND GIVEN NAME
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	CITY	STATE & ZIP CODE/COUNTRY	
203	FULL NAME OF INVENTOR	FAMILY NAME	FIRST GIVEN NAME	SECOND GIVEN NAME
	RESIDENCE & CITIZENSHIP	CITY	STATE OR FOREIGN COUNTRY	COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
	POST OFFICE ADDRESS	CITY	STATE & ZIP CODE/COUNTRY	

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 201	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 202	SIGNATURE OF INVENTOR 203
DATE	DATE	DATE

[ ] Signature for fourth and subsequent joint inventors.  
 Number of pages added \_\_\_\_\_.

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Office of Initial Patent Examination -- Scanning Division



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